Secrets of the Russian Chess Masters

VOLUME 2

BEYOND THE BASICS

LEV ALBURT & LARRY PARR

GAMES/CHESS

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To my students, who inspired me to write this book
— Lev Alburt

To Tai, Christianna and Ian
— Larry Parr

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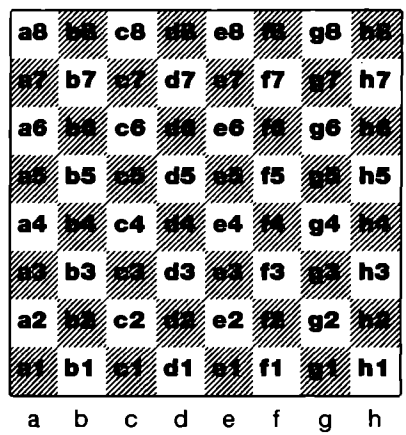
SECRETS OF THE RUSSIAN CHESS MASTERS: BOOK 2

Beyond the Basics

Understanding Chess Notation

THE NOTATION SYSTEM USED IN THIS BOOK is called ***algebraic***, and it is accepted in nearly all countries as a simple way of designating the squares of the chessboard and of representing the moves of a game. Here's a quick overview. If you need a more thorough explanation, be sure to pick up our *Secrets of the Russian Chess Masters, Book 1: Fundamentals of the Game.*

Take a look at the following diagram:



The letters running from a to h below the board represent vertical columns that are called ***files***, while the numbers to the left of the board denote horizontal rows that are called ***ranks***. Simply run your finger up to, say, the number 4 and then move it to the right until it intersects with the e-file, and you land on the e4-square.

WRITING DOWN MOVES

Here is how algebraic notation works. If you start a game by moving the White pawn in front of the King two spaces, you write 1. e4 (a convention is that pawn moves do not require the letter "P"). If Black responds by moving the pawn in front of the Queen two spaces, you write 1. ... d5 (the

three dots in front of d5 mean that Black made the move, and they are used only when writing Black's move without White's move in front of it). A capture by White on the next move is written 2. exd5.

Here is a table giving the symbols used in chess notation:

THIS SYMBOL	INDICATES
K	A King
Q	A Queen
R	A Rook
B	A Bishop
N	A Knight
x	A capture
+	Check
=	A pawn promotion to a designated piece
e.p.	*En passant* capture
0-0	Kingside castling
0-0-0	Queenside castling
...	White's move has been omitted
mate	Checkmate

In this book we use the following symbols to comment on the quality of the moves as well:

THIS SYMBOL	INDICATES
!	A good move
?	A bad move
!!	An excellent move
??	An awful move
!?	An interesting move
?!	An interesting but doubtful move

That's it! You're ready to start learning the secrets of the Russian chess masters!

1 Strategy and Planning

IN CHESS YOU MUST PLAN AHEAD. Chess ***strategy*** is the general long-term planning one uses when formulating plans; chess ***tactics*** are the devices employed to overcome short-term obstacles in implementing the plans.

SETTING GOALS

The basic and obvious approach to planning is to set specific goals. Do you wish to win, draw or postpone defeat for as long as possible? Are you zeroing in for a quick checkmate, or are you looking for a safe, if slow, path to cashing in on a material advantage?

Sounds simple. Yet it is precisely in the area of setting goals that players land in trouble. The most common affliction is an inability to reevaluate goals as the concrete situation on the chess board shifts. During the heat of battle, even world champions may lack the necessary objectivity to cease trying for a win after a mistake on their part—despite the fact that reducing their expectations is necessary to hold a draw and avoid a loss. We remember one world championship match game between Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov in which titleholder Kasparov spent over one hour on a single move and then expended 30 or more minutes on two more moves—a totally impractical expenditure of time under a time limit of 40 moves each in 2½ hours. Kasparov later found himself having to make 10 or 15 moves in less than a minute and lost the game.

What went wrong? Out of frustration with an inaccuracy on his part, Kasparov was searching for a win that was no longer there.

Setting goals is the most basic element of strategy, and it requires an objectivity that can be honed only by experience.

Former world champion Emanuel Lasker used to say that it is better to follow even a bad plan than to play without any plan at all. Of course, the wisdom of Lasker's observation depends on just how awful the bad plan happens to be. Even a blind man has more chances of survival wandering along a precipice than someone with 20/20 vision heading in a straight line for a cliff with the firm resolve of jumping off it.

There are plans that can be called typical—one of the most common being to devise a way to win material and then to trade the remaining pieces to win in the endgame. A player who has, say, two extra pawns will want to trade off most of the pieces to reach an ending with his King and extra pawns versus the opponent's lone King. Pushing the pawns forward to make a Queen and then checkmating the opposing King is usually an easy task for players with moderate experience. A good example is this position between an amateur and a chess computer; White sees an opportunity to trade off the remaining pieces to reach an easily won King-and-pawn endgame:

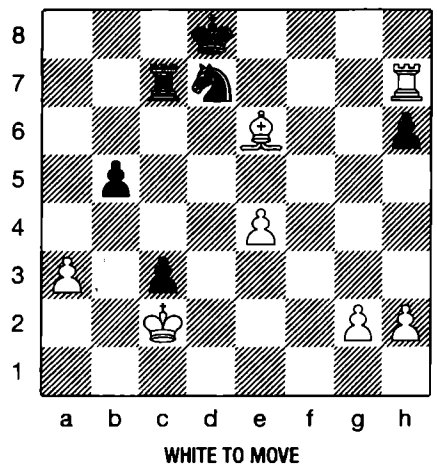


DIAGRAM 1

WHITE TO MOVE

White should win this position without difficulty in a variety of ways, but there is nothing wrong with finding the most elementary continuation. The strategy: White trades off the remaining Rooks and minor pieces and then enters a King-and-pawn ending that would be difficult not to win.

1. **Rxd7+** **Rxd7**
2. **Bxd7** **Kxd7**
3. **Kxc3 and White wins**

White's plan of exchanging off Rooks and minor pieces to enter a King-and-pawn ending solved the problem of how to win a position in which the first player had a significant material advantage. He simply remembered the old rule about exchanging pieces rather than pawns when enjoying a couple of extra pawns and created a King-and-pawn ending in which Black had no survival chances whatsoever.

THE RULE OF THE SQUARE

When evaluating plans for entering an endgame, beginners often find it hard to decide whether their distant King has enough time to cross the board to stop an enemy pawn from Queening. They wind up counting squares and trying to visualize the movements as the King and pawn race across and up the board. If something distracts them, they have to start the counting over again.

A neat mental trick to minimize the amount of work involved in making these calculations is called "the rule of the square." Take a look at Diagram 2. Can Black stop the White pawn?

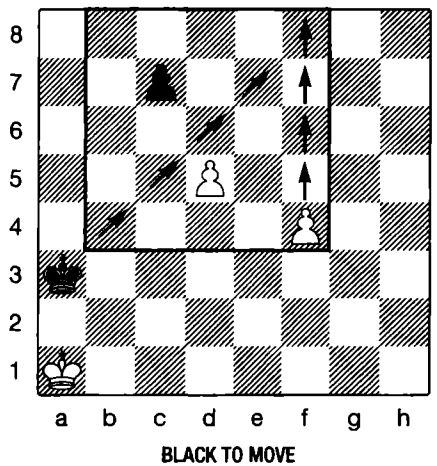


DIAGRAM 2

BLACK TO MOVE

Here is the rule and how to set it up in your mind: Imagine a line extending from the pawn to its Queening square, and then form a square whose sides match the length of that line. If the defending King on its move can enter this square, it can catch the pawn. So, at first glance Black can indeed stop the White f-pawn by entering the square with 1. ... Kb4.

There are a few exceptions, and Diagram 2 is one of them. After 1. ... Kb4, White has a little combinative trick that turns the tables by forcing the Black King to make a detour: 2. d6! cxd6, and now the Black King must go around a corner with ... Kc5, ... Kc6 and ... Kd7—and arrives too late to prevent the pawn from Queening.

SHORT-TERM, LONG-TERM PLANS

Short-term plans can be calculated fairly precisely. In Diagram 3 from a French Defense, each side has only one route to enter the other's position: the open c-file.

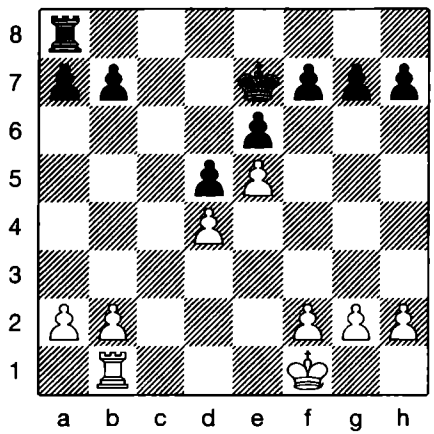


DIAGRAM 3

BLACK TO MOVE

If Black were about to move, here is how he would think about a short-term plan: "Material is even. I must play 1. ... Rc8 immediately; otherwise, White will play 1. Rc1 himself or even Ke2 and Kd3 keeping me out, and the game is a draw. But if I play 1. ... Rc8 right away, I threaten ... Rc2 and ... Rd2, winning the pawn on d4. After 2. Ke2 Rc2+ 3. Ke3, White's Rook must stay on b1 to guard the b-pawn, and the King on e3 is relegated to standing guard on the d- and f-pawns. In short, White's two pieces are tied down to defense. That's the good news! The bad news is that these two pieces appear to defend everything. On its own, my Rook can do no more than maintain the status quo—to be sure, a nice state of affairs, but I am not forcing the win of any material. Still, I can see that the maneuver of ... Rc8 and ... Rc2 has tied White down nearly completely. That cannot be bad and is almost certainly good for me. Thus, I play 1. ... Rc8."

So much, then, for short-term planning.

Black must also think beyond the Rook maneuver: Since the Rook alone will not win material, Black must somehow help out the Rook with either his King or some pawns, which comprise the sum of his remaining forces. Thus, most players of moderate experience will recognize that after ... Rc8 and ... Rc2, one idea might be to bring the Black King around to c6, where it may eventually invade on c4 or elsewhere.

This kind of thinking is called long-term planning and may even include a mental picture of the following (or some such) position:

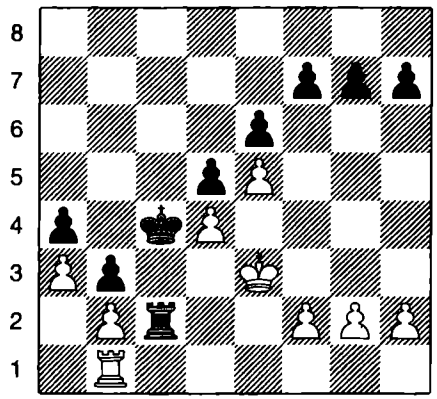


DIAGRAM 4

BLACK TO MOVE

One winning idea here is 1. ... Rxb2 2. Rxb2 Kc3, followed by pushing the b-pawn forward, forcing White to sacrifice his Rook to stop the pawn, and then using the Black King to capture White's a-pawn. White will have to bring his King over to the a-file to stop the pawn, while Black moves to capture the d- and e-pawns.

Of course, few players will calculate the exact moves needed to reach the above diagram. They will conclude that the kind of position shown above can be more or less achieved and that it will offer good, practical winning chances.

CREATING WEAKNESSES

Long-term goals include creating weaknesses in the opponent's position that are not easily dissolved. Players typically look for opportunities to isolate or double an opponent's pawns or to leave him with a complex of weak squares around his King.

Some of these long-term goals arise from the nature of a given opening. In the French Defense, for example, a main line runs 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3.

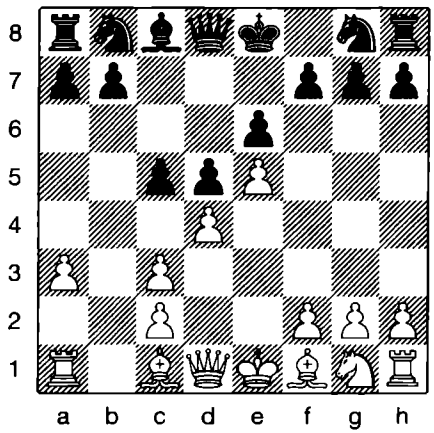


DIAGRAM 5

The doubled c-pawns do not usually prove to be a serious weakness because of White's strong position in the center. But both players in this opening know that if several pieces get traded, then the doubled c-pawns may prove to be weak.

Creating weaknesses often means playing by positional rote. Doubled pawns are considered bad, so you saddle the opponent with them. But there are times when doubled pawns can open files for the opponent and provide him with attacking chances. Or they may prove powerful because they control key squares, denying these squares to enemy pieces.

ERICH MARCHAND–MAURICE WERTHEIM
CORRESPONDENCE, 1943

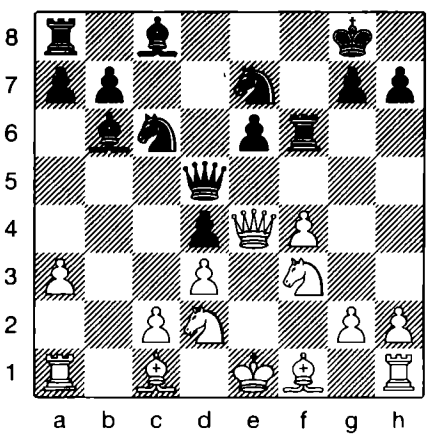


DIAGRAM 6

WHITE TO MOVE

In this position, White traded Queens with 1. Qxd5, hoping to free his

cramped position. But instead of the expected 1. ... Nxd5, Black showed sound positional judgment in playing 1. ... exd5. The d5-pawn guards c4 and e4, which are now denied to White's Knight on d2. Black gained a better position and later won.

When working out a strategic plan, one must sometimes exercise careful judgment in weighing respective advantages and disadvantages. In Diagram 7 from Robert Fischer–Boris Ivkov (Havana, 1965), Black plays 1. ... Na4, permitting White to double and isolate his a-pawns. Indeed, Black's Queenside pawn position looks like a mess, yet the move is in truth a brilliant piece of strategical judgment: Black regards the d3-square as crucial for infiltrating White's position, but he must pay the price of the doubled and isolated pawns to remove the c2-Bishop from guarding this key square. Is the price right?

ROBERT FISCHER–BORIS IVKOV
HAVANA, 1965

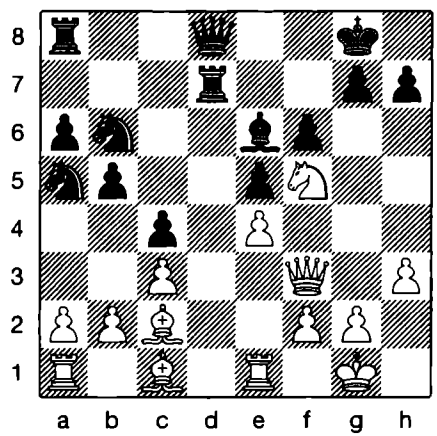


DIAGRAM 7

BLACK TO MOVE

1.	**...**	**Na4!**
2.	**Bxa4**	**bxa4**
3.	**Be3**	**Rd3**
4.	**Qg4**	**Qd7**
5.	**Bc5**	**Rc8**
6.	**Be7**	**Bxf5**

7. Qxf5 Nc6
8. Bc5

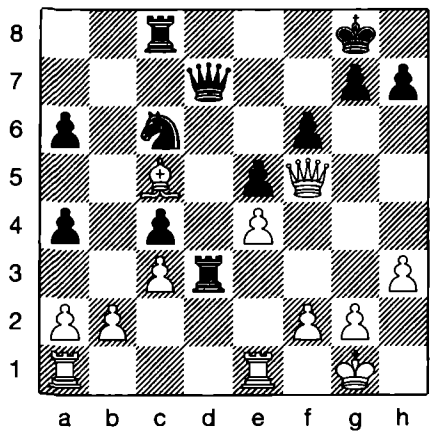


DIAGRAM 8

And now with 8. ... Rd8, Black can get a major initiative along the d-file and will have much the better position. Later, after several mistakes on both sides, Black won. The key point here is that Black justified his strategical insight that he should allow doubled and isolated pawns in return for control of the crucial d3-square.

CHANGING PLANS

Mental flexibility is absolutely necessary to play good and consistent chess. Relatively few games run perfectly along pre-planned lines. The opponent finds unexpected resources, and you make mistakes here and there. The result: An apparently "sure" win slips into a draw.

At which point, the inflexible player with a stubborn desire to win in spite of the changed situation on the board continues as if the position is still a win. The result: He loses.

During a game, all players must learn to adjust to changing realities and reformulate plans without remorse. In chess, what really counts is what comes next. Do not try to ignore hard facts and do not spend time lamenting an earlier mistake. Just as you cannot unring a bell, so you cannot unmake a hasty move.

2 Tactics: The Soul of Chess

TACTICS, THE SHORT-TERM AND IMMEDIATE means to implement a strategical plan, are the soul of chess. Some wits have even called tactics the sole of it.

The commonsense view is that tactics are overwhelmingly important. On every move, a player must perform elementary, though crucial, tactical calculations. On some occasions you need to ask the most basic of chess questions: "Am I blundering away material? Have I left my King open to checkmate?" These are the questions that everyone from world champion Garry Kasparov to an absolute beginner must ask. And, of course, tactical operations can be far more complicated, requiring less commonplace and deeper calculations. Still, basic one- and two-move tactical thinking is required if you are ever to win a game. You can win games with bad strategical plans if the opponent blunders catastrophically, but you cannot win games if *you* blunder catastrophically. You can survive awful strategy but not awful tactics.

That's the bottom line.

In the 1985 world title match in Moscow, Kasparov capitalized on a spectacular one-move blunder by Anatoly Karpov:

GARRY KASPAROV–ANATOLY KARPOV
1985 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH, GAME 11

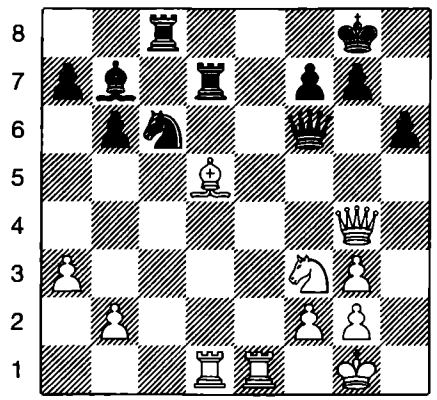


DIAGRAM 9

BLACK TO MOVE

Writes Kasparov, "Karpov, almost without thinking, played 22. ... Rcd8??." Black wants to double his Rooks along the d-file and attack the Bishop on d5—a natural positional and tactical idea. But tactics deal not with moves that "look good" but with specific threats. Kasparov now plays 23. Qxd7!, and Karpov resigns after 23. ... Rxd7 24. Re8+ Kh7 25. Be4+.

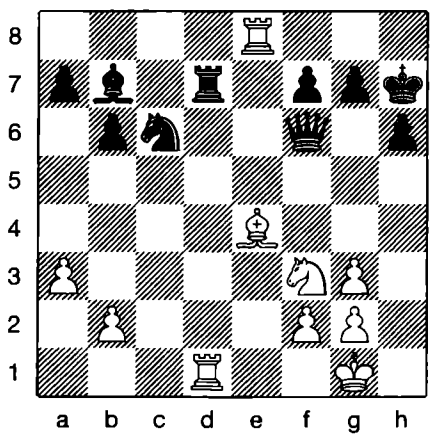


DIAGRAM 10

Not only will White get two Rooks for his Queen, he will also win a piece after 25. ... g6 26. Rxd7 Ba6 27. Bxc6 because if 27. ... Qxc6, then 28. Rxf7 mate.

Karpov's failure in this game had nothing at all to do with strategy (Kasparov himself says that Black could have equalized with 22. ... Rd6); it

soon learns, you can make 20 good moves and ruin everything by overlooking, as Karpov did, a tactical bolt-out-of-the-blue.

World champions make such mistakes very rarely, and when they do, it is man-bites-dog news. Yet most games even among grandmasters are decided by tactical mistakes, some subtle and many not so subtle. Among non-professionals, basic tactical miscues decide 98-plus percent of games.

Hence the central importance of studying tactics.

TACTICAL THEMES

We have some great news for you. For nearly all players, studying tactics is more fun than anything else in chess. Much of the beauty in chess—a pastime that has been called an art in the form of a game—can be found in the tactical interplay of pieces and pawns.

Tactical themes such as pins, double attacks, skewers and many others occur repeatedly in widely disparate positions. This chapter examines seven of these themes and devices, and Chapter 4 looks at several more. Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, which contain numerous chessercizes on these themes, help you to translate the academic knowledge of what is meant by a pin or a double attack into practical wisdom that you can apply when playing a game.

For quick improvement, you need to master tactical themes so that you can recognize an opportunity with little if any thought. Yes, knowing endgames is important; studying strategical plans is informative; and learning openings is helpful. But having a quick eye for tactical possibilities will win you games from more experienced players who have not made a systematic study of tactical themes.

Chess tactics can be marvelously intricate and, for chess lovers, extraordinarily beautiful. Yet most players have no idea of the flights of fancy that are possible. Chess composers are artists who create positions (called ***problems***) out of thin air; these positions are not from real games. Problems are a model of economy: They have only one solution, and the only pieces on the board are those necessary for the solution. Here is a problem by Russian composer Mark Liburkin (1910–1953), a stunning

ballet of pieces and pawns in which White can win only by underpromoting pawns to Knight, Bishop, and Rook, with the "crowning" blow being an unstoppable promotion to a Queen after 14. f6:

COMPOSER: MARK LIBURKIN
FIRST PRIZE, *VECHERNYA MOSKVA*, 1933

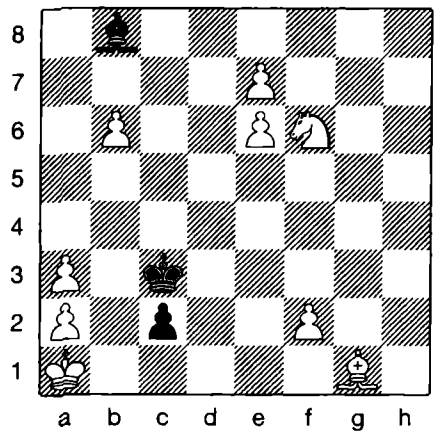


DIAGRAM 11

WHITE TO MOVE AND WIN

1. Ne4+

Before White can do anything, he must relieve Black's threats of 1. ... c1=Q mate and 1. ... Be5 and 2. ... Kd2 mate.

1.	...	Kd3
2.	Nc5+	Kc3
3.	Nb3	Be5
4.	f4	Bg7
5.	e8=N!	

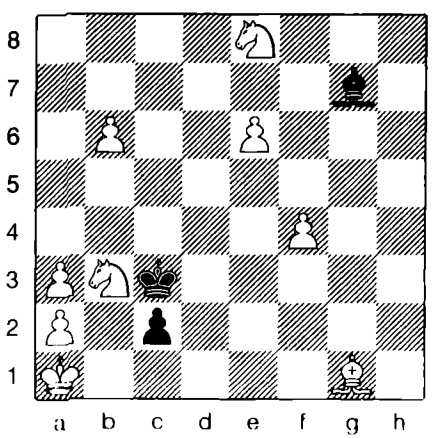


DIAGRAM 12

Thanks to the pawn underpromoting to a Knight, White can answer this threat with Nxg7.

5. ... **Bh8**

Black renews his threat of ... c1=Q+, ... Kc2+, etc.

6. **f5**

We see yet another point behind 4. f4 and 5. e8=N!. On 6. ... c1=Q+ 7. Nxc1 Kc2+, White can relieve check with 8. f6. Notice that the Knight on e8 guards the f6-pawn.

6. ... **Be5**

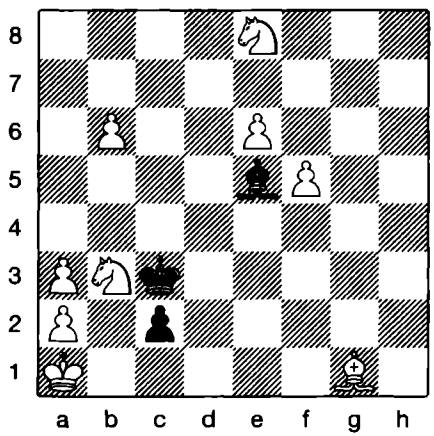


DIAGRAM 13

Undaunted, Black renews the threat of mate.

7. **Bh2!**

White sacrifices his Bishop to lure Black momentarily from the a1-h8 diagonal, which will give him just enough time to promote his b-pawn. The text move is an example of a tactical theme called a decoy, which we discuss in Chapter 4.

7. ... **Bxh2**

8. **b7**

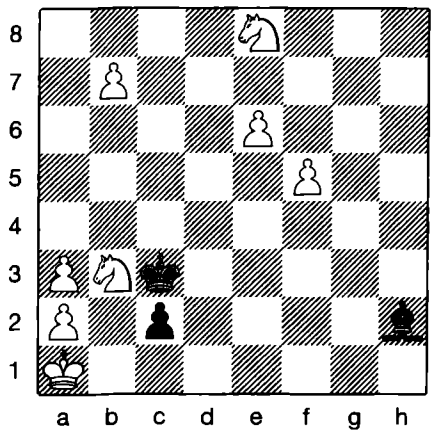


DIAGRAM 14

8. ... **Be5**

Black is threatening 9. ... Kd3+ 10. Nd4 Bxd4 mate. And if White tries to counter this threat with 9. b8=Q, then Black forces a draw by 9. ... Kc4+ 10. Qxe5 c1=Q+ 11. Nxc1 stalemate! The Black monarch has no move.

9. **b8=B!!**

Astonishing. After promoting to a Knight on move five, White must now take a Bishop if he wishes to win. The point is that after 9. ... Kc4+ 10. Bxe5 c1=Q+ 11. Nxc1, there is no stalemate when White has a Bishop rather than a Queen.

9. ... **Bxb8**

Once again, Black's Bishop is lured off the a1-h8 diagonal. Notice how the themes of underpromotion and decoy repeat themselves in this problem.

10. **Nc7!**

Another sacrifice. This Knight move is an example of two additional tactical themes, interference (White's Knight temporarily interferes with Black's returning his Bishop to e5) and vacating or clearing a square (White removes his Knight from e8 to hasten promotion of yet another e-pawn).

10. ... **Bxc7**

11. **e7** **Be5**

Black is not giving up, but ...

12. e8=R!!

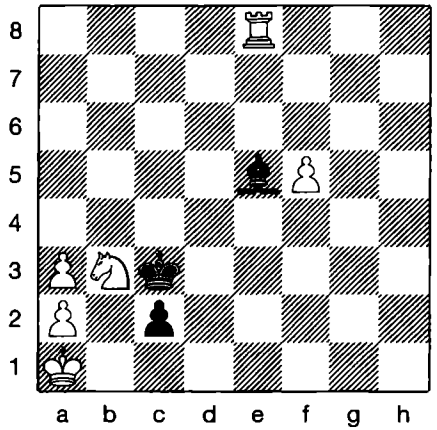


DIAGRAM 15

... neither is White! He underpromotes for a third time. Just as on move 9, White cannot promote to a Queen because of stalemate after 12. e8=Q Kc4+ 13. Qxe5 c1=Q+ 14. Nxc1.

12. ... Bf6

Black renews the threat of 13. ... c1=Q+ 14. Nxc1 Kc2+ 15. Re5 Bxe5 mate.

13. Re6 Bg7

14. f6, and White wins

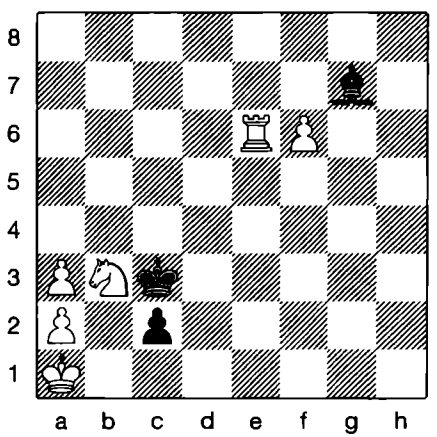


DIAGRAM 16

The battle of threat and counterthreat is finally over. Black has no way of renewing the mating idea on the long diagonal, and White will win thanks to his extra material.

The above problem is beautiful, mind-boggling and ... *intimidating.* However, you will certainly never be required to work out such a lengthy and difficult combination of moves in a real game. We present Liburkin's brainstorm, which he may have spent days or weeks perfecting, simply to provide you with an idea of the magic that is possible on the 64 squares.

POWER OF THE PIN

Of all tactical themes, the ***pin*** is most common. It occurs when you attack an opponent's piece or pawn that cannot be moved without exposing a different man, usually of greater value. There are two kinds of pins, ***relative*** and ***absolute.*** In relative pins, the pinned piece is able to move even if it is not a good idea to do so.

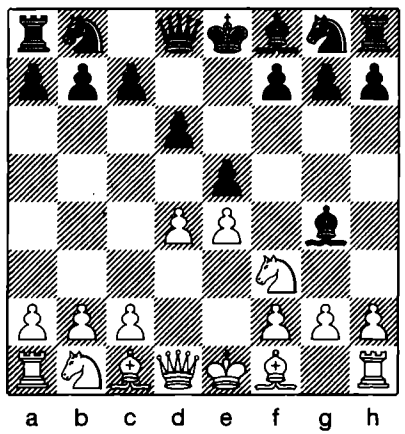


DIAGRAM 17

EXAMPLE OF A RELATIVE PIN

The above position is reached after 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6 (Philidor's Defense) 3. d4 Bg4, when Black's Queen Bishop pins the f3-Knight on the Queen. The pin is relative because White can legally play, say, 4. Nfd2??, though Black wins easily after 4. ... Bxd1.

The position in Diagram 18 contains an absolute pin; White cannot legally move the Knight because Black could then capture his King.

EUGENE FOMIN – JAMES TURNER
BELLEVUE, 1965

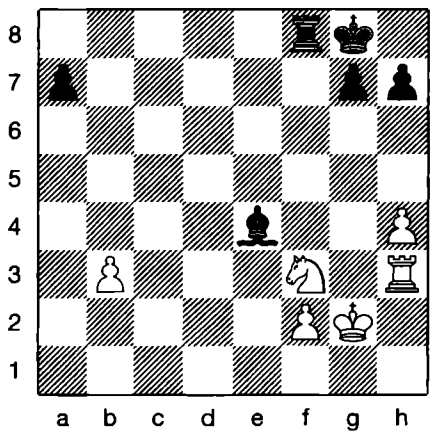


DIAGRAM 18

POWER OF THE PIN

Black wins this position no matter who is on move. Not only is the White Knight pinned, it cannot escape the pin! If 1. Kg3, Black wins with either 1. ... Rxf3+ or 1. ... Bxf3; if the White King moves backward, Black also captures on f3 with either Rook or Bishop. For the same reason of needing to protect f3, White must keep his Rook on either h3 or g3.

Do you see Turner's brilliant winning plan? It is a wonderful example of the power of the pin: 1. ... Rf4 followed by 2. ... Kf7, 3. ... Ke6 and so on. The Black King eventually goes to e2, when the second player has three pieces attacking the Knight on f3, thereby winning the steed. White is completely helpless to derail this plan.

Several years ago, a chess researcher examined nearly 20,000 master-level games and discovered that pins—both actual and threatened—determined the outcome of nearly half of the games. In chess, the pin is mightier than the sword.

One of the most surprising ideas on the chessboard is the ***cross-pin***, which establishes a pin on a pinning piece; it is one way to relieve an annoying pin.

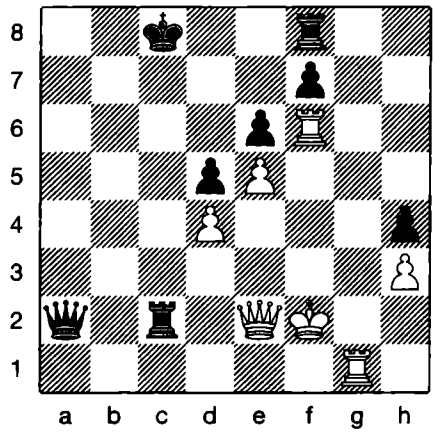


DIAGRAM 19

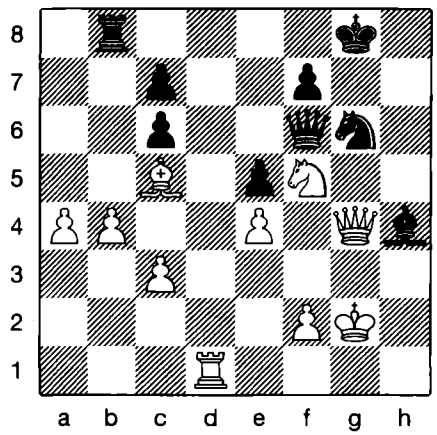
WHITE TO MOVE

The game appears to be over. The Black Rook, which is supported by the Queen, pins White's Queen on its King. After the apparently forced 1. Re1, Black triumphs easily after 1. ... Rxe2+, winning a Queen for a Rook. But White can lift Black's pin with 1. Rc1!!, a cross-pin that nails the c2-Rook on the Black King. White can now capture on c2 with an elementary win. And if 1. ... Rxc1, White has a decisive material advantage after 2. Qxa2.

THE SKEWER

Think of the ***skewer,*** or the "shish-kebab" tactic, as the opposite of a pin. A friendly piece attacks an enemy piece, compelling that piece to move off the line of attack, leaving a man or square behind it on the same line liable to capture or occupation. A typical skewer:

ROBERT FISCHER – MOISES STEKEL
SANTIAGO INTERNATIONAL, 1959



WHITE TO MOVE

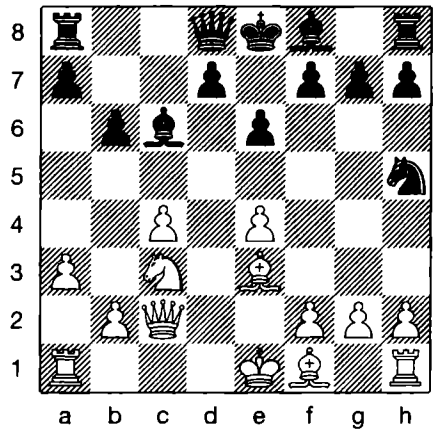
DIAGRAM 20

Young Bobby Fischer found the game-ending 1. Be7, a skewer that forces Black's Queen on f6 to move off the h4-d8 diagonal, thereby leaving the Bishop on h4 open to capture. Notice that Black cannot play 1. ... Nxe7 because the Knight is pinned by White's Queen; notice further that for the same reason, the Knight does not protect the Bishop on h4.

THE DOUBLE ATTACK

A move that produces two or more threats is called a ***double attack.*** Next to pins, it is the most common tactical device.

LARRY CHRISTIANSEN – ANATOLY KARPOV
WIJK AAN ZEE, 1993

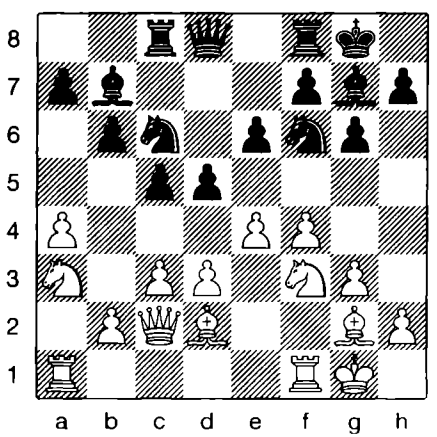


BLACK TO MOVE

DIAGRAM 21

Karpov, champion of the World Chess Federation from 1975 to 1985, now played 1. ... Bd6??, which is perhaps the worst blunder of this great player's career. Christiansen responded with 2. Qd1, a double attack that hits Black's Bishop on d6 and Knight on h5.

Another kind of double attack occurs when a single move permits two men to attack at two or more points. Here is an example from a game between two amateurs:



BLACK TO MOVE

DIAGRAM 22

Queen on c2 and pawn on d3 as well as uncovering the Black Bishop on b7 against White's pawn on e4. White responded with 2. cxb4, and Black played 2. ... cxb4, which is yet another double attack. He threatens both 3. ... bxa3 and 3. ... Rxc2.

Of course, not every tactical device wins material. For example, tactics may be employed in order to gain a favorable position or to force a draw in an otherwise losing position.

THE FORK

In chess, a ***fork*** refers not to cutlery but to an attack by a single man on two or more enemy men. Thus, some experts classify the double attack in Christiansen–Karpov (Diagram 21) as a fork. But among many players the word "fork" commonly refers to an attack on at least two enemy men by a Knight or a pawn. Here is a stunning example:

POPOV–BULJOVCIC
SOMBOR, 1966

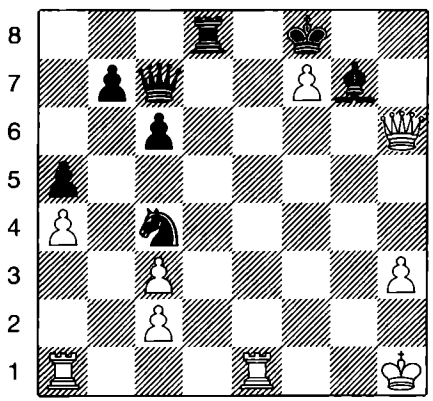


DIAGRAM 23

WHITE TO MOVE

The double attack is hidden for the moment. White plays 1. Re8+!, forcing 1. ... Rxe8 because of 1. ... Kxf7 2. Qe6 mate. Now comes the wonderful deflection sacrifice 2. Qxg7+! Kxg7, which forces the King away from e8. White underpromotes with 3. fxe8=N+!, a fork that picks up the Queen by 4. Nxc7. Black is down a Rook and resigned.

THE DISCOVERY

For beginners, one of the most pleasant discoveries is the ***discovery***—a tactical theme in which a man moves so as to unleash an attack by another friendly man. When such a move results in two threats, it can be considered a kind of double attack.

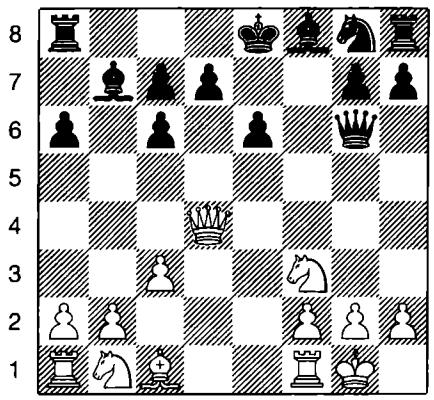


DIAGRAM 24

WHITE TO MOVE

At first blush, White appears to win immediately with 1. Ne5?, forking Black's Queen and his d-pawn as well as threatening 2. Qxd7 mate. Since Black cannot defend d7 with 1. ... Qf7 because of 2. Nxf7, he appears obliged to resign. But in chess, nothing is more important than tactical alertness, which is the quality of recognizing the presence of a tactical theme—in this case, the stunning riposte of 1. ... Qxg2+!!, forcing 2. Kxg2. Black now has 2. ... c5+, a discovered attack check on White's King and a discovered attack on his Queen through ... cxd4. Black finishes up a pawn with what should be a winning endgame.

No one can ever possess perfect tactical alertness. Yet the preceding position is a good example of when White should have stopped "to think for his opponent." A good practical technique of avoiding the previous disaster is at some point to look at the board from the opponent's point of view—especially when it seems that your opponent has handed you a winning game. Before deciding on your plans, check to see if the enemy has plans of his own.

The ***double check*** is a species of discovered check in which two checks are given by a single move—by the man that actually moves and by the stationary man behind it. For example:

CARL SCHLECHTER – JULIUS THIRRING
VIENNA, 1893

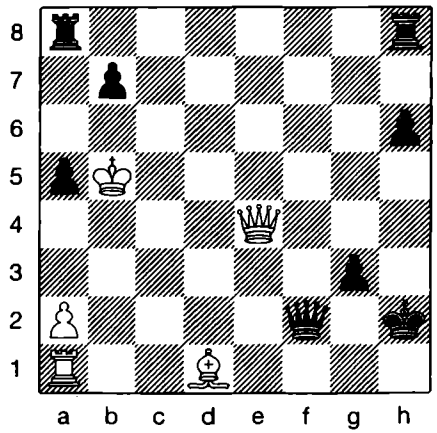


DIAGRAM 25

WHITE TO MOVE

The winning idea is 1. Qh1+!!, which decoys the Black King to h1 after 1. ... Kxh1. Now comes a double check by 2. Bf3+, simultaneously attacking the Black King with the Bishop and the uncovered Rook. The game ended after 2. ... Kh2 (the only legal move) 3. Rh1 mate.

If your King is ever in double check, do not waste time looking to move another man besides the King. The King must always move when in double check. There is no exception to this rule.

INTERFERENCE

Interference occurs when the move of a piece or pawn cuts off another man's line of attack. When one is the victim of this tactical theme, we have a case of what chess people call "annoying interference."

ARTURO REGGIO – JACQUES MIESES
MONTE CARLO, 1903

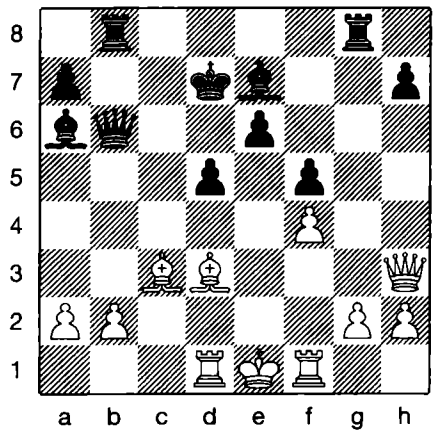


DIAGRAM 26

BLACK TO MOVE

Black plays 1. ... Rg3!!!, a move that seems to make no sense. White can capture the Rook in two different ways, and Black has simply surrendered a Rook for nothing.

Not so! For 1. ... Rg3!!! is a beautiful example of interference, obstructing the White Queen's control of the key e3-square. The threat is simply 2. ... Qe3+ 3. Be2 Qxe2 mate. If 2. hxg3, the White pawn on g3 also interferes with its own Queen, and Black once again forces mate after 2. ... Qe3+. The only other reasonable idea, 2. Qxg3 (the move actually played), is refuted victoriously by 2. ... Bh4!, pinning the Queen on the King. The Queen cannot take the Bishop because of ... Qe3+ once again. The end result is that Black wins decisive material.

The move 1. ... Rg3!!! points up the inexact science of pigeon-holing tactical themes. We classified the move as an example of interference, but since the Rook attacks both the Queen and the d3-Bishop, it can conceivably be termed a double attack. Or because the move lures the White Queen to g3, where it can be pinned by ... Bh4, it can also be called a decoy sacrifice, a tactical theme to be discussed in Chapter 4.

The winner of the above game was Jacques Mieses (1865–1954), a German-born Jew who ended his days in England. While never a world championship contender, Mieses gained undying fame for his risky, artistic play. Other stronger masters have long been forgotten by the chess

public, while Mieses' memory is evergreen. Yes, chess is above all a sport in which victory is the ultimate spoil. Yet, the royal game is also an art that confers immortality on those who serve its muse.

CLEARANCE

When a man vacates a square or opens a line for a friendly unit, the tactical theme is called ***clearance*** or ***line clearance***. This theme, which is often the opposite of interference, frequently involves a sacrifice.

ANTHONY SANTASIERE – FRED REINFELD
NEW YORK, 1937

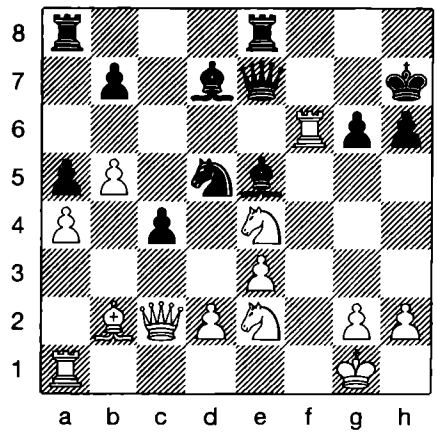


DIAGRAM 27

WHITE TO MOVE

White enjoys strong pressure against the Black King and wishes somehow to combine his Queen on c2 and Rook on f6 in an attack against the pawn on g6 without permitting Black the time to defend the pawn by, say, ... Rg8. The solution is 1. Ng5+, a ***clearance sacrifice*** that permits the Queen to attack g6 immediately. The game did not last long: 1. ... hxg5 2. Qxg6+ Kh8 3. Bxe5 Qxe5 4. Qh6+ Kg8 5. Rg6+ Kf7 6. Qh7+ Kf8 7. Rg8 mate.

REVIEW OF TACTICAL THEMES	
The Pin	An attack on an opponent's piece or pawn, which cannot be moved without exposing a different man, usually of greater value. In a relative pin, the pinned man can move legally; in an absolute pin, the man pinned on a King cannot move legally.
The Skewer	Your piece attacks an enemy piece, compelling the latter to move off the line of attack, thereby leaving a man or square behind it on the same line liable to capture or occupation.
The Double Attack	A move that produces two or more threats.
The Fork	An attack by a single man on two or more enemy men. In common parlance, a fork is a double attack by a Knight or pawn.
The Discovery	A man moves so as to unleash an attack by a friendly piece.
Interference	A move by a piece or pawn that cuts off the line of another man.
Clearance	A move that vacates a square or opens a line for a friendly man.

3 Chessercizes for Tighter Tactics

Doing chessercizes builds your chess game by making your tactics more muscular.

The 50 chessercizes in this chapter are arranged according to theme, and they progress in difficulty within each thematic section. Pins come first, followed by skewers, double attacks, forks, discoveries, interference and clearance.

Permit us to sound a frustration alert. Although several of the positions should pose only minimal trouble, others are either tricky or just plain difficult. You may find yourself spending a very long time on a given position. Don't do that! The point behind these chessercizes goes beyond offering a challenge; it is to familiarize you with the mechanics of tactical themes. If you are stumped but eventually understand a given position after studying the answer, then you have gotten a lot of value for your effort.

We advise you to spend no more than five to 10 minutes on any single chessercize. If you cannot find the solution, then go on to the next teaser. Later, you can return to the positions that defeated your earlier efforts and try again or check the solutions. But remember: You learn more from the chessercizes that you cannot do than from those that you can. No matter what your performance in terms of solving these riddles, you still come out ahead once you understand the solution.

Happy chessercizing. And remember: The speediest road to improvement is to master tactical themes!

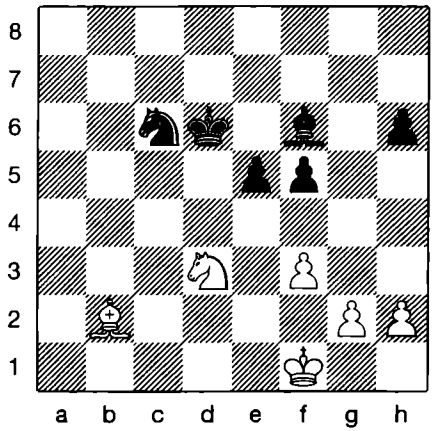


DIAGRAM 28

1. Black to move. Is 1. ... f4 a good or bad move?

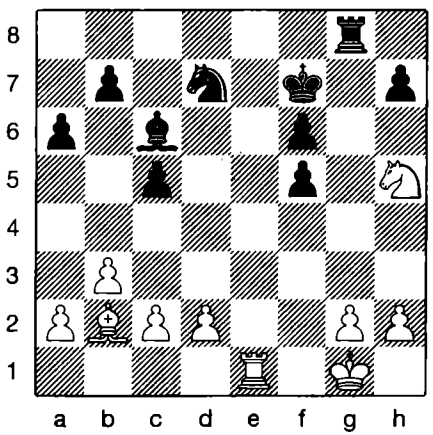


DIAGRAM 29

2. White to move. Black threatens 1. ... Rxg2+. Is 1. Re2 or 1. g3 the better defense?

ANSWERS

1. After 1. ... f4, Black loses a pawn to 2. Nxf4. Did you overlook that the e-pawn is pinned on the f6-Bishop?

2. The better defense is 1. g3. On 1. Re2?, Black wins material by 1. ... Bf3 because of the double attack on the Rook and Knight. Of course, 2. gxf3 is impossible because the g-pawn is pinned by the Black Rook.

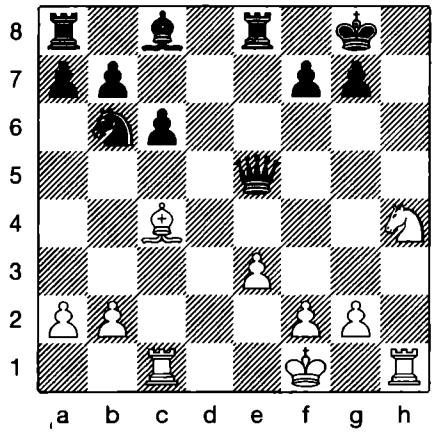


DIAGRAM 30

3. White to move. Use a pin and win.

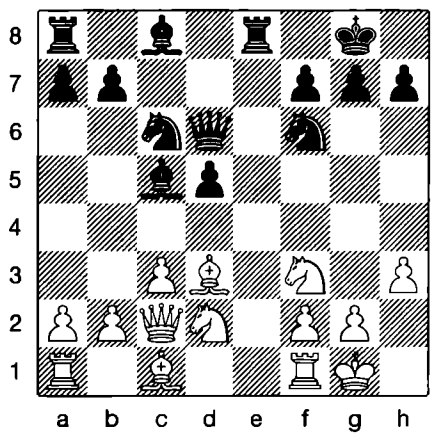


DIAGRAM 31

4. Black to move and win. Be alert.

ANSWERS

3. In Abrahams–Thynne (Liverpool, 1930), White could have played 1. Ng6. The Knight cannot be taken because of the Bishop pin, and the threat is 2. Rh8 mate. There is no good way to stop this threat.

4. The move is 1. ... Qg3!. Did you see it? The Queen cannot be taken because the Bishop on c5 pins the pawn on f2, and Black threatens 2. ... Bxh3 and 3. ... Qxg2 mate. If 2. Bf5, the conclusion could be 2. ... Re2 3. Nd4 Nxd4, winning easily. From the game Tatai–Korchnoi (Beer-sheva, 1978).

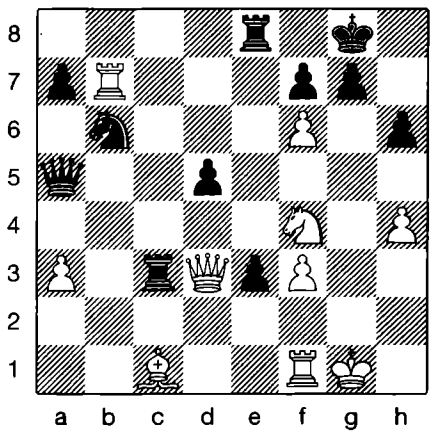


DIAGRAM 32

5. White to move and win. Think pin.

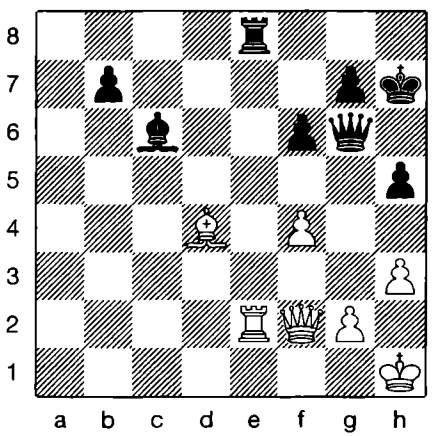


DIAGRAM 33

6. Black to move and win. Pin 'em and win 'em.

ANSWERS

5. In Bronstein–Geller (Soviet Championship, 1961), White forced resignation by 1. Qg6!, threatening 2. Qxg7 mate. On 1. ... fxg6, the conclusion is 2. Rxg7+, and no matter where the King moves, 3. Ng6 is mate. A common idea for Black against a castled King is ... Qg3 (as in the previous example); a common idea for White is Qg6. Look for both when seeking to surprise an opponent—if the position suggests that these possibilities are probable.

6. Against Alexander Kotov in the 1939 Soviet Championship, future three-time world champion Mikhail Botvinnik (1948–57, 1958–60, 1961–63) found the diagonal pin 1. ... Qxg2+ 2. Qxg2 Rxe2. The Rook cannot be captured because of the Bishop on c6. After 3. Qxc6 bxc6, Black should win easily with his extra material.

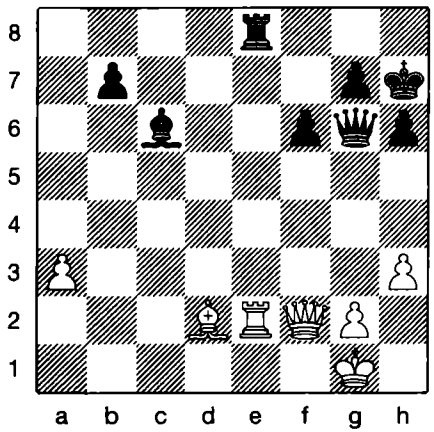


DIAGRAM 34

7. Black to move and win. Kotov learned his lesson!

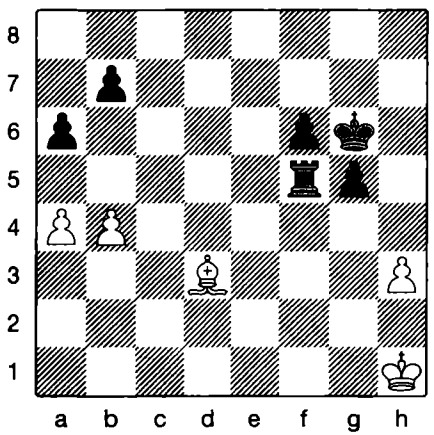


DIAGRAM 35

8. Black to move. Who stands better?

ANSWERS

7. Never say that Soviet Grandmaster Kotov failed to learn from bitter experience. Against Argentina's Carlos Guimard in the 1946 Groningen International, Kotov as Black reached a position remarkably similar to his loss against Botvinnik in the previous example. Kotov played 1. ... Bxg2, the point being that 2. Qxg2 is bad because of 2. ... Rxe2. This time the pin is vertical! After 2. Rxe8 Be4+ (a discovery) 3. Kh2 Qxe8, Black eventually won with his two extra pawns.

8. White wins easily no matter who is on move. His threat is simply 1. Kg2, followed by 2. Kg3 and 3. Kg4, picking up the pinned Rook. Black can do nothing to prevent this plan because 1. ... g4 is answered by 2. hxg4, winning the Rook. In fact, Black will eventually lose his Rook to *zugzwang* even without White moving up the King!

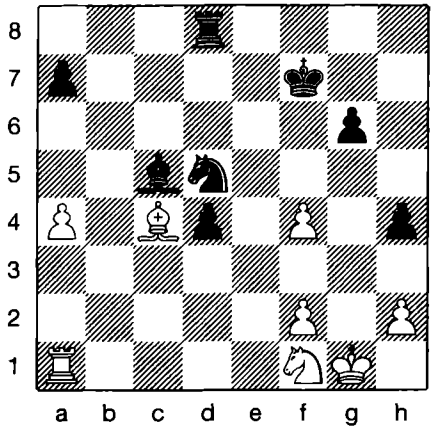


DIAGRAM 36

9. White to move. Who is winning?

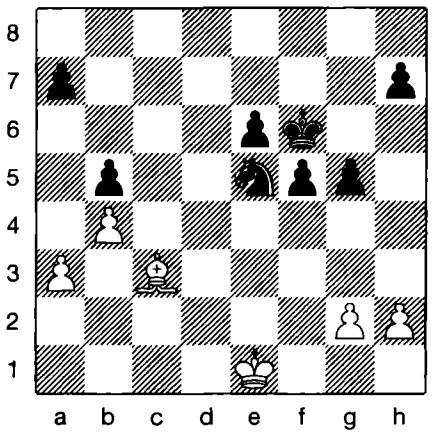


DIAGRAM 37

10. White to move. Who is winning?

ANSWERS

9. From Kramer–Horowitz (New York, 1948). White wins with 1. Re1!, threatening to win the pinned Knight by 2. Re5. And if 1. ... Kf6, White has 2. Re5, establishing a lateral pin on the Knight against the Bishop. Al Horowitz (1907–1973), the Black player, used to quip that "the pin is mightier than the swordfish." Here he was the victim of his own truth.

10. Another example of the power of the pin! White wins with 1. g3!, when Black will soon run out of useful pawn moves and have to move his King, thereby losing the Knight. If 1. ... f4, then 2. g4, preventing the Black King from breaking the pin with ... Kf5. After 1. ... h5 2. h3!, Black resigned. On 2. ... h4, the answer is 3. g4, and on 2. ... g4, White plays 3. h4. Black must eventually move his King and lose the Knight. From Tarrasch–Romberg (Nuremberg, 1893).

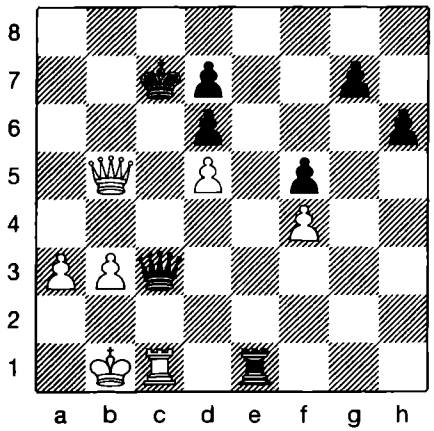


DIAGRAM 38

11. White to move. Is there a better move than 1. Rxe1?

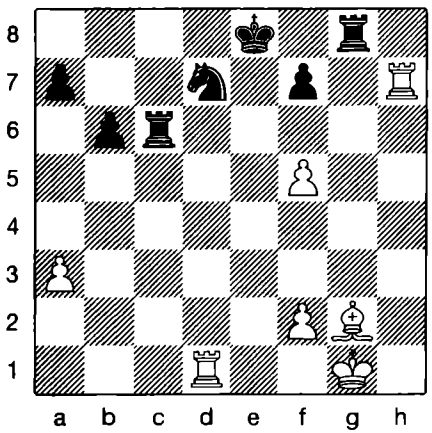


DIAGRAM 39

12. White to move. De-pin, then pin!

ANSWERS

11. Yes. White wins immediately with the cross-pin, 1. Qa5+, attacking the pinned Queen. White cannot play 1. Rxc3+ because of the pin on his Rook.

12. In Stein–Smyslov (Moscow, 1972), White wants to play 1. Bxc6, capturing the Rook and then pinning and winning the Knight on d7. The fly in this ointment is the Rook on g8, which pins the Bishop. So White plays 1. Rh8!!, which wins a piece after 1. ... Rxh8 2. Bxc6. In the actual game, Black did not last very long after 1. ... Rcg6 2. fxg6 Rxh8 3. Bc6 (the pin again) 3. ... Rg8 4. Bxd7+. The lesson here is always to look for inventive ways to break troublesome pins.

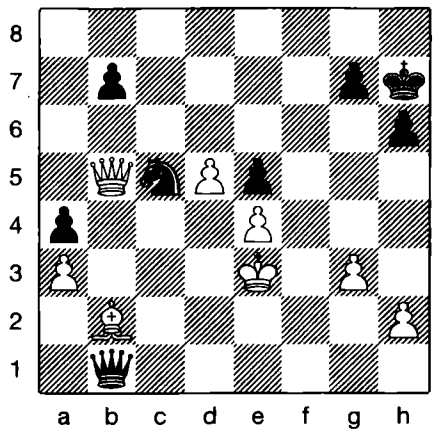


DIAGRAM 40

13. White to move. Is 1. Qxc5 a good move?

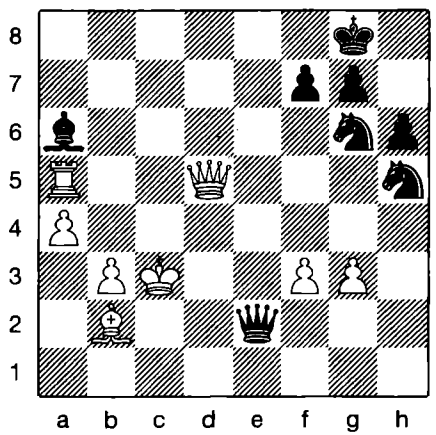


DIAGRAM 41

14. Black to move. After 1. ... Bb7 2. Qxb7, is White winning?

ANSWERS

13. No! Black skewers King and Queen after 1. Qxc5 Qg1+. This possibility arose in Pirc–Lilienthal (Warsaw Olympiad, 1935).

14. Far from it. After 1. ... Bb7 2. Qxb7 in Alekhine–Vidmar (Semmering, 1926), Black skewered King and Rook by 2. ... Qe1+ 3. Kc4 Qxa5, eventually winning with his extra material.

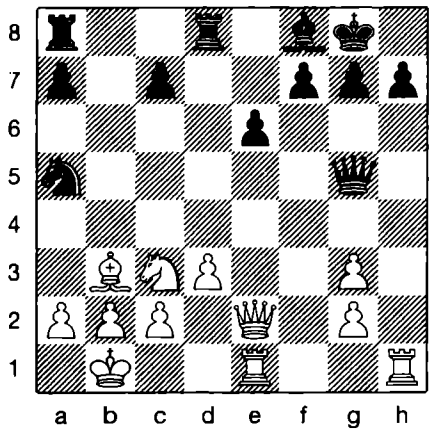


DIAGRAM 42

15. White to move. Is there a shish-kebab in the house?

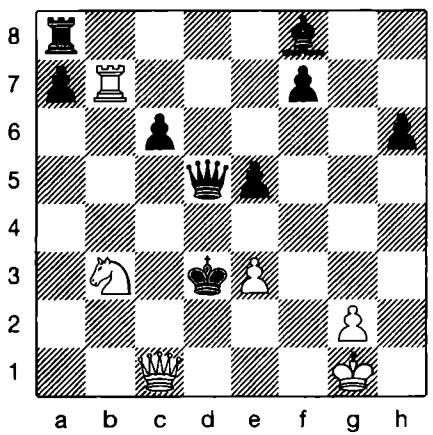


DIAGRAM 43

16. White to move and win.

ANSWERS

15. After 1. Rh5, White has impaled a Queen and Knight on his skewer. White wins a piece and the game.

16. White wishes to skewer Black's King and Queen with 1. Qd1+, except that the position gets messy after 1. ... Ke4. The trick is to pin the Queen by 1. Rd7!, and if 1. ... Qxd7, then White skewers with 2. Qd1+, winning the Queen. Black continued 1. ... Bd6 2. Rxd6! Qxd6 3. Qd1+, and White won with his extra material.

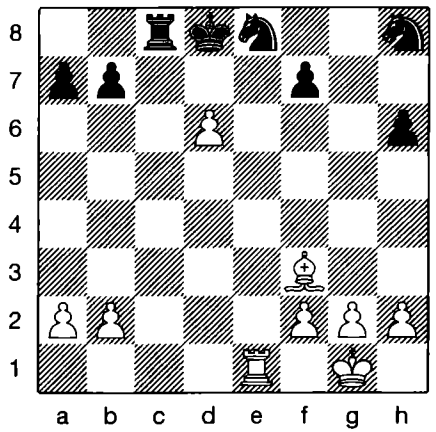


DIAGRAM 44

17. White to move and win.

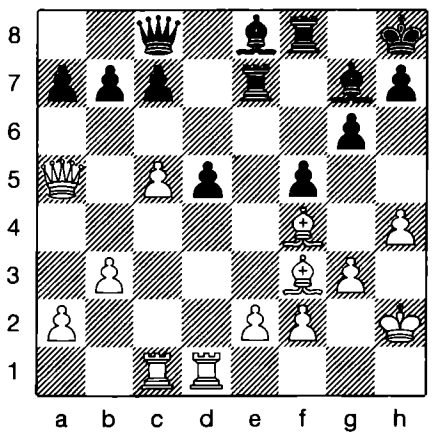


DIAGRAM 45

18. White to move and win. A surprise skewer.

ANSWERS

17. White is winning. In Kikovic–Forintos (Budapest, 1957), the first player won a Rook for a pawn after 1. d7 (a pawn fork) 1. ... Kxd7 (forced) 2. Bg4+ (a skewer on King and Rook) 2. ... Kd8 3. Bxc8. Black cannot play 3. ... Kxc8 because he loses both Knights after 4. Rxe8+ and 5. Rxh8.

18. The hidden skewer is 1. Bd6!, which runs through both of Black's Rooks. If 1. ... cxd6, then 2. cxd6 is a double attack on the Queen and Rook. In the actual game, Black gave up a Rook for a Bishop after 1. ... Qd7 2. Bxe7 Qxe7 and eventually lost. From Petrosian–Botvinnik (Moscow, 1963).

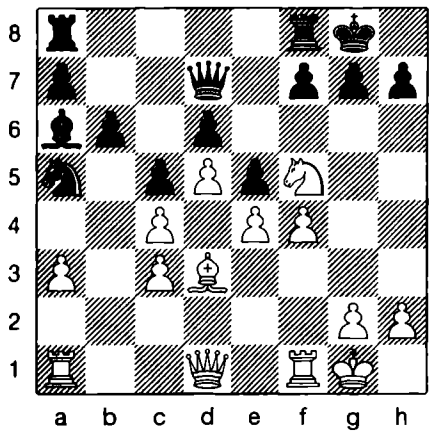


DIAGRAM 46

19. White to move and win. Discovery process.

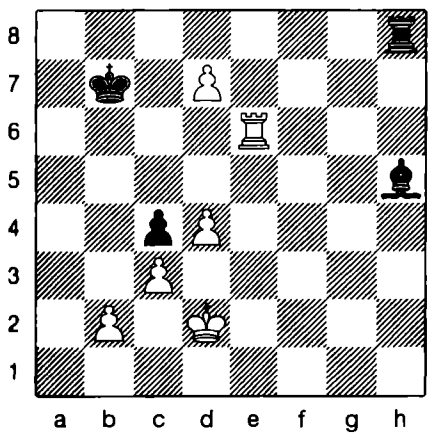


DIAGRAM 47

20. White to move and win. Double trouble.

ANSWERS

19. White's discovery process begins with 1. Qg4!, a double attack. The threats are 2. Qxg7 mate and 2. Nh6+, winning Black's Queen with 3. Qxd7 thanks to the discovered attack. On 1. ... f6 or 1. ... g6 (relieving the mate threat), White still grabs the Queen after 2. Nh6+.

20. Another double attack. After 1. Rh6, Black has an unpleasant choice between 1. ... Rxh6 2. d8=Q and 1. ... Rd8 2. Rxh5 Rxd7 3. Rc5 and 4. Rxc4.

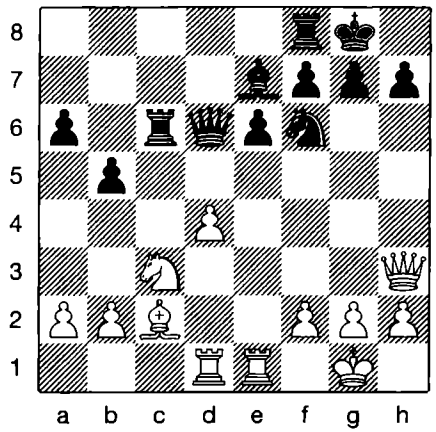


DIAGRAM 48

21. White to move. Who stands better?

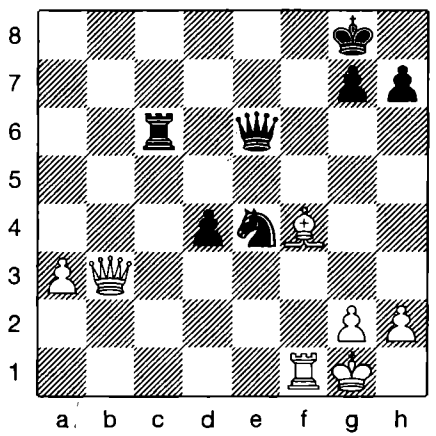


DIAGRAM 49

22. White to move and win.

ANSWERS

21. White wins after 1. Ne4!, forking Queen and Knight and threatening 2. Nxf6+ Bxf6 3. Qxh7 mate. In the game Bronstein–Berger (Amsterdam, 1964), Black surrendered a Rook for a Bishop by 1. ... Nxe4 2. Bxe4 (a double attack) 2. ... g6 3. Bxc6 and lost shortly. The winner of this game, Russian GM David Bronstein, is noted for his original ideas. In 1951 he drew a world championship match against Botvinnik.

22. The brilliant winning move is 1. Bd6!!, a highly unusual species of double attack that threatens 2. Qxe6+ or 2. Rf8 mate. Notice that 1. Bd6 is also an example of interference, pinning, and disconnecting Black's Rook and Queen. On 1. ... Rxd6, White forces mate with 2. Qb8+, and on 1. ... Nxd6, the Queen is lost after 2. Qxe6+.

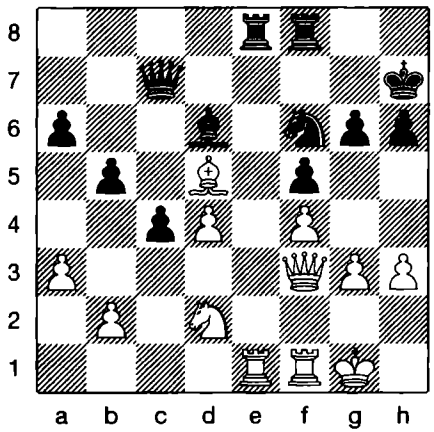


DIAGRAM 50

23. Black to move. Is 1. ... Bc5 a good move?

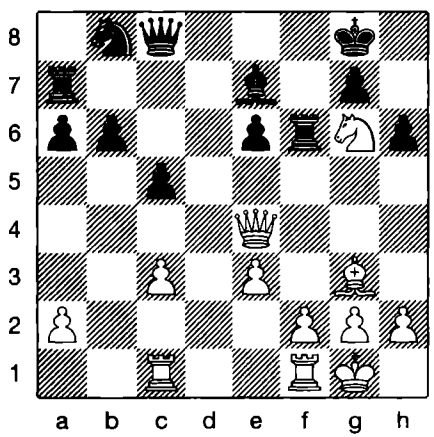


DIAGRAM 51

24. White to move and win. Into the corner pocket.

ANSWERS

23. Yes. After 1. ... Bc5!!, the threat is simply 2. ... Bxd4+. If 2. dxc5, Black finishes up a pawn after 2. ... Qxc5+ (a double attack), followed by capturing the Bishop on d5. The attempt to defend by 2. Qf2 is answered by 2. ... Rd8 3. dxc5 Rxd5, when Black will eventually pick up the c-pawn. From Benjamin–Parr (Correspondence, 1986).

24. The astonishing winning move is 1. Qa8!!, a double attack on the Rook and Knight. Putting the Queen in the corner pocket is an example of deflecting the a7-Rook from a key defensive task after 1. ... Rxa8 2. Nxe7+ (forking King and Queen) 2. ... Kf7 3. Nxc8. White finishes up a piece. Played in a minor Russian tournament.

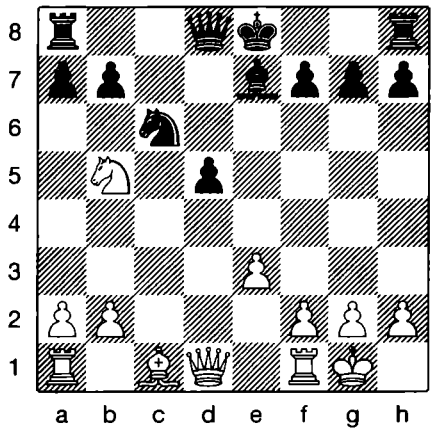


DIAGRAM 52

25. White to move and win a pawn.

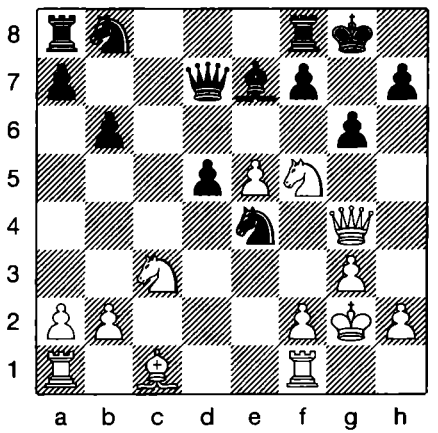


DIAGRAM 53

26. White to move and win.

ANSWERS

25. The fork pokes hard after 1. Qxd5 Qxd5 2. Nc7+, winning a pawn. Black obviously misplayed the opening, and this kind of pseudo-Queen sacrifice followed by an immediate fork is a useful trick to remember.

26. In Santasiere–Fine (New York, 1933), White found the crushing 1. Nxd5, a double attack on the e7-Bishop and e4-Knight. And if 1. ... Qxd5, then White wins with 2. Nxe7+, a fork reminiscent of the previous example. The game continued 1. ... Bg5 2. Qxe4 gxf5 3. Qf3 Bd8 4. Nb4 a5 5. Qxa8, and White won.

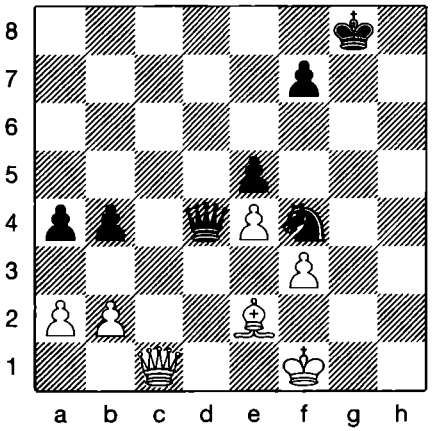


DIAGRAM 54

27. Black to move. Where's the eating utensil?

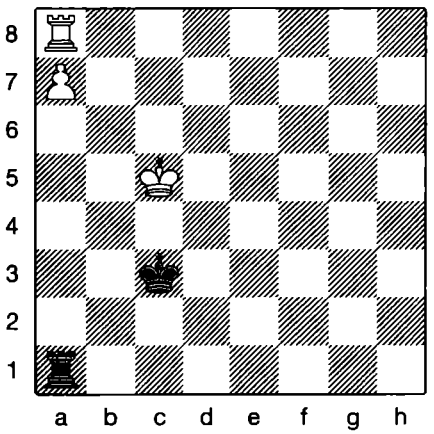


DIAGRAM 55

28. White to move and win. A tiny discovery.

ANSWERS

27. The fork is on e2 after 1. ... Qg1+! 2. Kxg1 Nxe2+ 3. K-moves Nxc1. From Tolush–Simagin (Soviet Championship, 1952). Notice the similarity between this position and the Popov–Buljovcic example given in Diagram 23. In both instances, the stronger side sacrificed a Queen momentarily in order to win material using a fork.

28. White wins by 1. Rc8!, answering 1. ... Rxa7 with the discovered check, 2. Kb6+. This position comes near the conclusion of an endgame study by Alexei Troitzky (1866–1942), the great Russian chess composer. Notice that if Black's King were on, say, the d-file, White could win prosaically by checking with his Rook and then Queening the pawn.

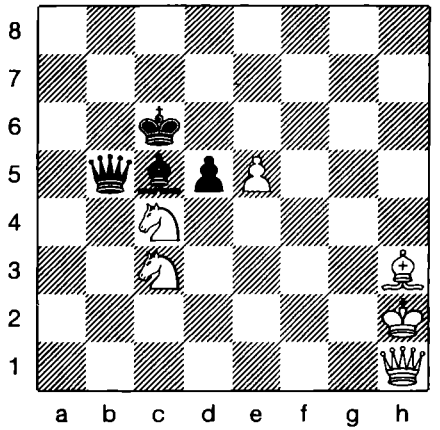


DIAGRAM 56

29. Black has just played 1. ... d7-d5. White to mate in one move. A hidden discovery.

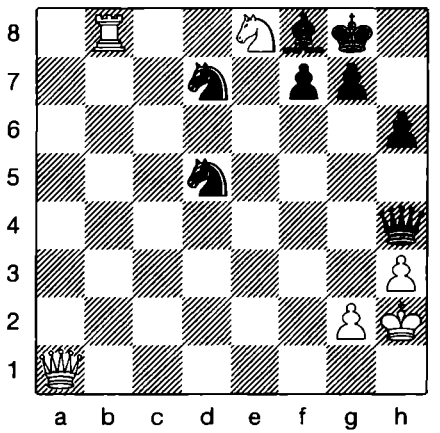


DIAGRAM 57

30. White to mate in two.

ANSWERS

29. An unusual discovered checkmate after 1. exd6 *e.p.* mate!. Did you find this one-move mate, or did you forget about the *en passant* rule?

30. The solution is 1. Qxg7+ Bxg7 2. Nf6 mate. The Black King is in double check, and it has no safe escape square. Remember the rule: A King in double check must move.

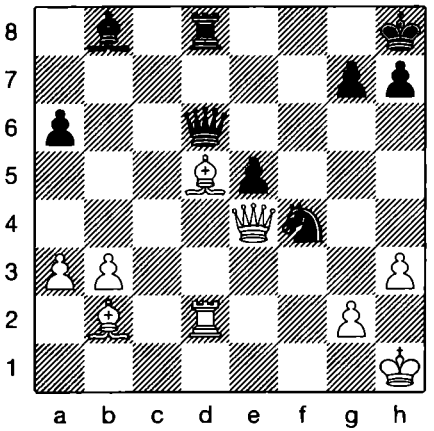


DIAGRAM 58

31. White to move. Is there a clear win for White?

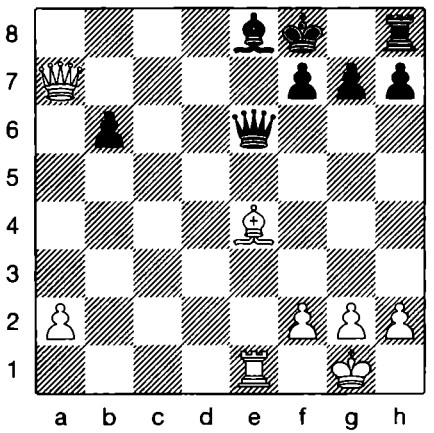


DIAGRAM 59

32. White to move and win. List the discoveries.

ANSWERS

31. Yes! Absolutely devastating is 1. Bg8!, threatening 2. Qxh7 mate and 2. Rxd6. If Black attempts to remove his Queen from the discovered attack and to defend the mate by 1. ... Qh6, then 2. Rxd8.

32. After 1. Qa3+, the discoveries include a discovered attack on 1. ... Kg8 2. Bxh7+ (winning a Queen and pawn for Rook and Bishop) and a discovered attack followed by mate after 1. ... Qe7 2. Bc6 Qxa3 3. Rxe8 mate. Black cannot play 2. ... Qxe1+ because of the pin on his Queen. Based on Larry Evans–Arthur Bisguier (U.S. Championship, 1957).

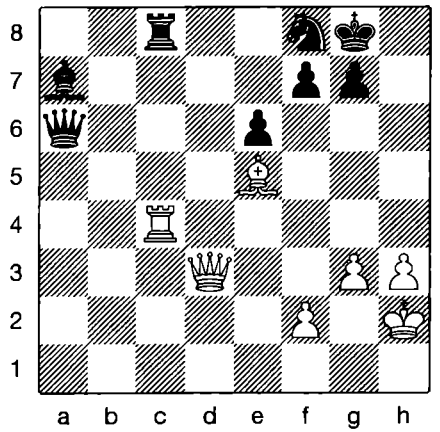


DIAGRAM 60

33. White to move. Can White avoid defeat in this position?

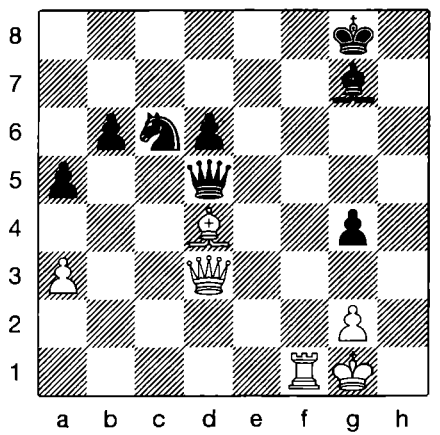


DIAGRAM 61

34. White to move. Force a discovery.

ANSWERS

33. Not only can White avoid defeat in this position, he can win it in grand style by a series of discovered checks. Here is the main line: 1. Rg4! (threatening both 2. Rxg7+ and 2. Qxa6) 1. ... Qxd3 2. Rxg7+ Kh8 3. Rxf7+ Kg8 4. Rg7+ (the alternation of normal checks with discovered checks is known as the ***windmill*** theme) 4. ... Kh8 5. Rxa7+ Kg8 6. Rg7+ Kh8 7. Rd7+ Kg8 8. Rxd3.

34. White can force mate or a discovered check by 1. Rf8+!!. The mate comes after 1. ... Bxf8 2. Qg6+ Bg7 3. Qxg7; the discovered check, which wins the Queen for a Rook, happens after 1. ... Kxf8 2. Bxg7+.

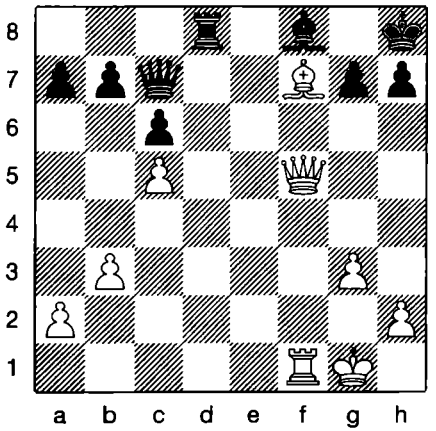


DIAGRAM 62

35. White to move and win. Annoying interference, please!

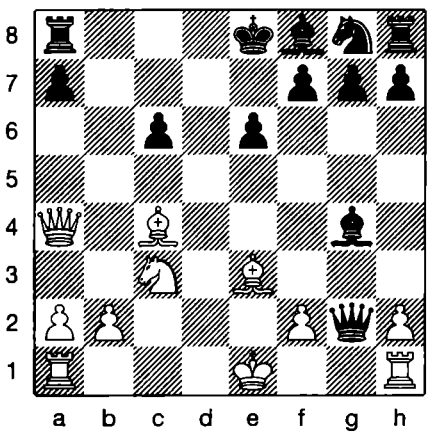


DIAGRAM 63

36. White to move and win.

ANSWERS

35. In Reti–Bogolyubov (New York, 1924), Black must have been annoyed indeed by interference after 1. Be8!!, threatening 2. Qxf8 mate. Black had no good defense and resigned.

36. The star move is 1. Bd5!, an example of interference that disrupts communication between Black's Queen and the pawn on c6. If 1. ... exd5, White wins easily after 2. Qxc6+ Ke7 3. Nxd5+ Kd8 4. Qxa8+. The capture 1. ... cxd5 is illegal because the pawn is pinned on the King.

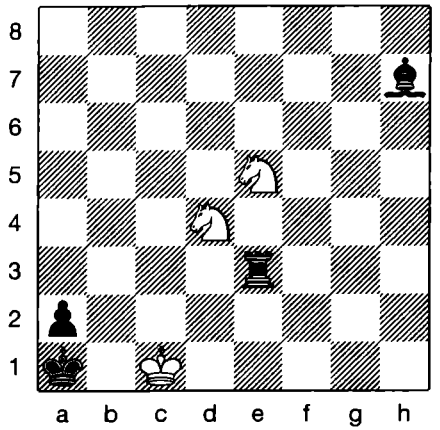


DIAGRAM 64

37. White to move and force mate.

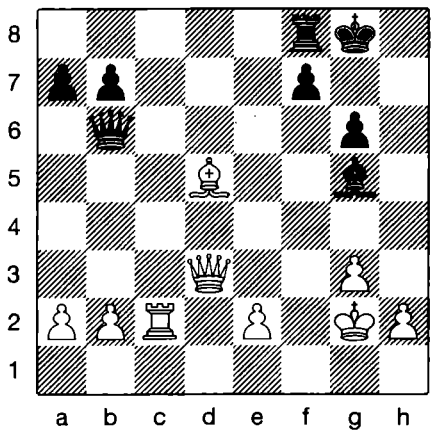


DIAGRAM 65

38. White to move. Infer interference.

ANSWERS

37. Simple interference. After 1. Nd3!, the threat is either 2. Nc2 mate or 2. Nb3 mate. White's move interferes with both the Bishop and the Rook. If 1. ... Bxd3, then 2. Nb3 mate, and if 1. ... Rxd3, then 2. Nc2 mate. Black can postpone matters by only one move with 1. ... Re1+ 2. Nxe1.

38. The theme here is lateral interference: After 1. Rc6 bxc6 2. Qxg6+ Kh8 (the f7-pawn is pinned) 3. Qh5+ Kg7 4. Qxg5+, Black has a choice between (I.) 4. ... Kh7 5. Be4+ f5 6. Bxf5+ Rxf5 7. Qxf5+ and (II.) 4. ... Kh8 5. Qh6+ Kg8 6. Be4 (threatening 7. Qh7 mate) 6. ... f5 7. Bxf5 Rxf5 8. Qg6+ and 9. Qxf5, with a winning Queen-and-pawn ending for White in both cases.

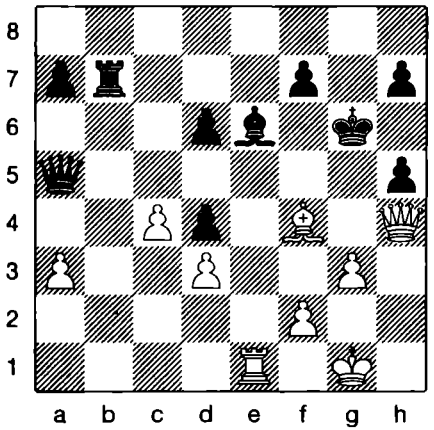


DIAGRAM 66

39. White to move.

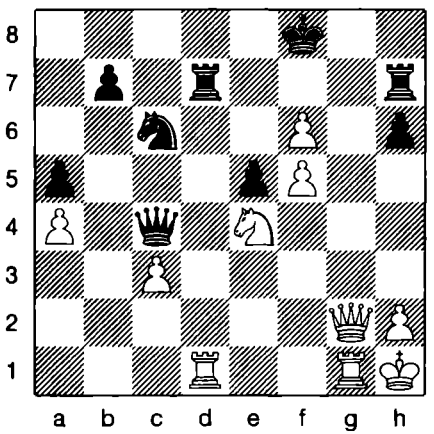


DIAGRAM 67

40. White to move.

ANSWERS

39. The same idea of lateral interference as in the previous example except in a more handsome setting. In Seirawan–Bisguier (U.S. Open, 1975), White found 1. Re5!!, with the idea of 1. ... dxe5 2. Qg5 mate. Black continued 1. ... Rb1+ but eventually lost to *force majeure* after 2. Kg2 Qxe5 3. Bxe5.

40. White would like to play Qg8+, but he must first cut off or interfere with the Black Queen's line of defense. The victorious move is 1. f7!. If 1. ... Rhxf7 (or 1. ... Rdxf7), White wins after 2. Qg8+ Ke7 3. f6+! (3. ... Ke6 4. Qg4 mate). If 1. ... Kxf7, White skewers King and Queen by 2. Qg8+. Finally, if 1. ... Qxf7, White wins the house after 2. Rxd7 Qxd7 3. Qg8+.

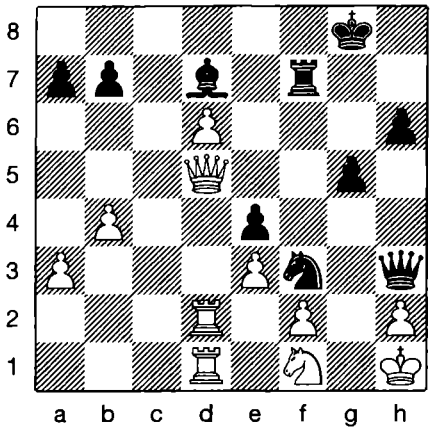


DIAGRAM 68

41. Black to move. Interfere and vacate.

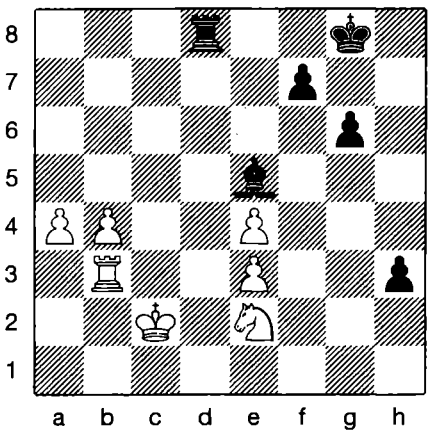


DIAGRAM 69

42. Black to move. Is 1. ... h2 Black's best move?

ANSWERS

41. For a moment, White has everything defended. That changes after 1. ... Ne1!, a move that interferes with the White Rook's ability to guard the Knight and threatens both 2. ... Qxf1 mate and 2. ... Qg2 mate. If 2. Rxe1, then Black occupies the square just vacated by the Knight and forces mate after 2. ... Qf3+ 3. Kg1 Bh3.

42. No. After 1. ... h2, White holds on by 2. Rb1. The knockout punch—the sockdolager—is the amazing interference inspiration, 1. ... Rd1!!! 2. Kxd1 (cutting off the Rook from the Kingside) 2. ... h2. Black will Queen his pawn and should win.

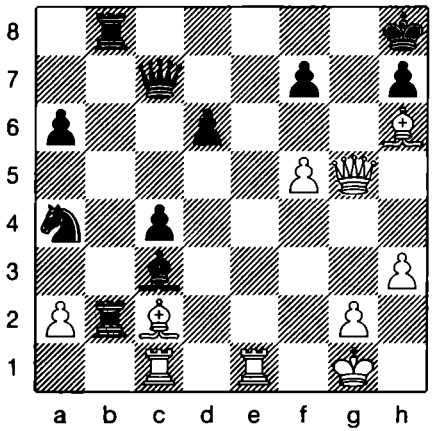


DIAGRAM 70

43. White to move and win. Frustration alert: It's a toughie.

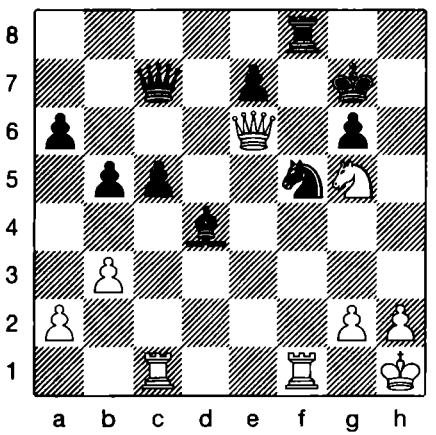


DIAGRAM 71

44. White to move and win. Vacate a square.

ANSWERS

43. White wants to play 1. f6 Rg8 2. Bg7+ Rxg7 3. Qxg7 mate. But after 1. f6, Black defends with 1. ... Qc5+, trading Queens. Once again, we caution you "to think for your opponent" when you think you see a winning move. Look at the position from his point of view! The solution is 1. Re5!!, another example of lateral interference that chokes off the Queen check and threatens 2. Qg7 mate. If 1. ... Rg8, then 2. Bg7+ Rxg7 3. Re8+ Rg8 4. Qxg8 mate. As for 1. ... Bxe5, White forces mate after 2. f6 Rg8 3. Bg7+. If Black tries 1. ... f6, White wins by 2. Qxf6+ Kg8 3. Qg5+ Kh8 4. Re7.

44. In Tal–Parma (Bled, 1961), White vacated the e6 square and cleared the way for a Knight fork by 1. Qxf5. Black loses a piece after 1. ... gxf5 2. Ne6+ Kg6 3. Nxc7.

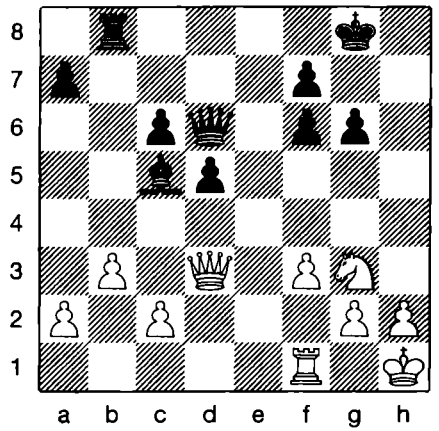


DIAGRAM 72

45. Black to move and force mate. Open files, clear ranks.

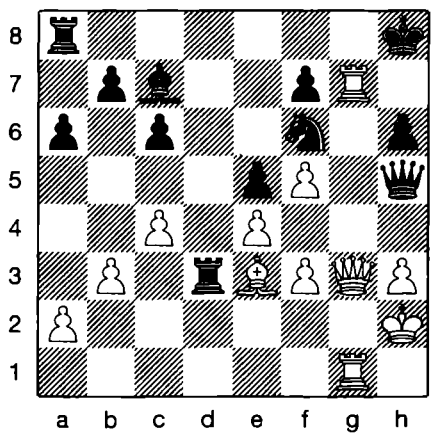


DIAGRAM 73

46. White to move and force mate.

ANSWERS

45. Black found a path to checkmate by first opening a file with 1. ... Qxg3 2. hxg3 and then clearing the eighth rank by 2. ... Kg7. The threat is 3. ... Rh8 mate. Notice how Black's Bishop guards the escape square of g1. From Alapin–Schiffers (Moscow, 1902).

46. In Lisitsin–Zagoryansky (Soviet Union, 1936), White cleared the g-file for his Queen by 1. Rh7+ Kxh7 (the conclusion is the same after 1. ... Nxh7) 2. Qg7 mate.

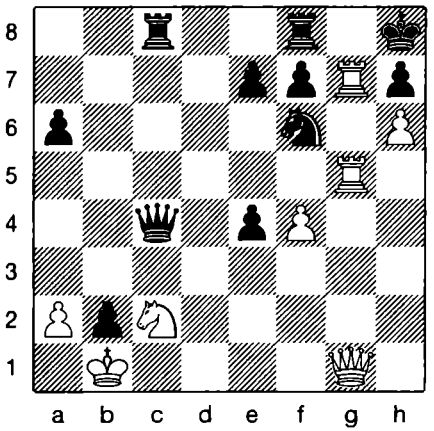


DIAGRAM 74

47. White to move and force mate. By hook or by Rook.

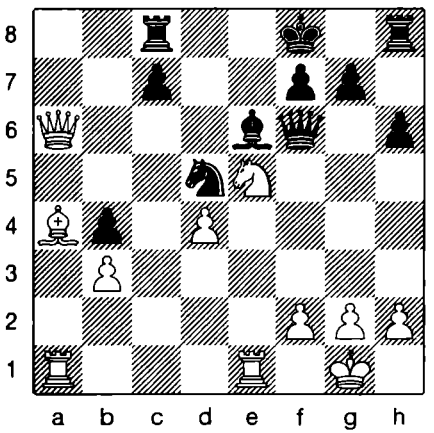


DIAGRAM 75

48. White to move. Declassify the King's file.

ANSWERS

47. White must sacrifice both Rooks to clear the g-file for his Queen: 1. Rc5 Qxc5 2. Rxh7+ Kxh7 (or 2. ... Nxh7) 3. Qg7 mate. The key move is 1. Rc5, clearing the way to g7 for White's Queen. A false solution is 1. Rxh7+? Kxh7? 2. Rg7+ Kh8 (if 2. ... Kxh6, then 3. Qg5 mate) 3. Rh7+ Kxh7 4. Qg7 mate. The problem is that Black has 1. ... Nxh7!, when the Rook on g5 blocks access to g7 for White's Queen. Hence the solution of 1. Rc5. Remember: If you do not recheck your thoughts first, then your opponent happily will!

48. Did you try to open the e-file by the careless 1. Qxc8+? Bxc8 2. Nd7+ Bxd7, when Black wins? Correct is 1. Nd7+! Bxd7 2. Qxc8+! Bxc8 3. Re8 mate. A small tip: If you find a flaw in your intended winning line, then recheck it for a possible winning transposition of moves.

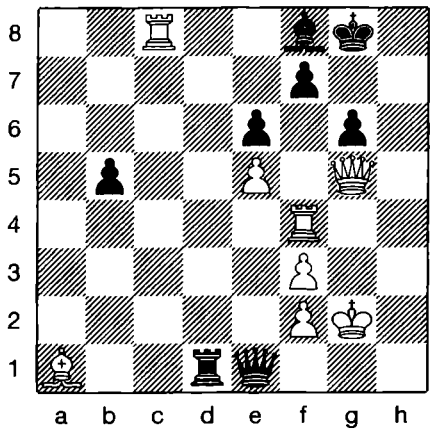


DIAGRAM 76

49. White to move and force mate.

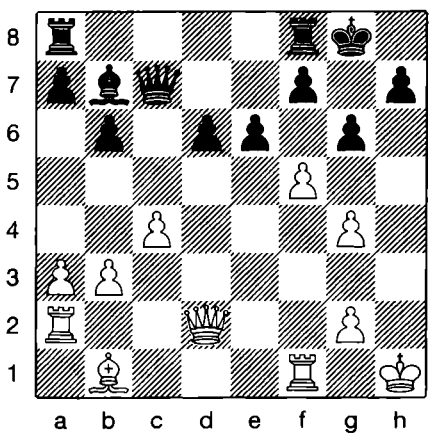


DIAGRAM 77

50. White to move. Open ranks.

ANSWERS

49. White blows open the f-file and forces checkmate by 1. Qxg6+ fxg6 2. Rcxf8+ Kg7 3. R4f7+ Kh6 4. Rh8+ Kg5 5. f4+ Kg4 6. f3 mate.

50. In a whirlwind assault on the Black King, White begins by 1. f6 (the threat is 2. Qh6 and 3. Qg7 mate) 1. ... Kh8 2. Qh6 Rg8 3. Rf3 (now the idea is 4. Qxh7+ and 5. Rh3 mate) 3. ... Bxf3 (forced) 4. gxf3. Suddenly, White has cleared his second rank, and the Queen Rook will enter the fray and deliver mate after Qxh7+ and Rh2.

4 Advanced Tactical Devices

THE IMPORTANT THING ABOUT LEARNING tactical themes is neither to memorize definitions nor to make hairsplitting distinctions as to whether a given move is a fork, a double attack or an example of interference. The important thing is to be alert to opportunities—actual or potential—to employ these themes during a game.

In chess, practice will not make perfect. Nothing makes perfect. But while most beginning and intermediate players are spending their limited time memorizing opening variations in the hope of catching an opponent in a trap, you should spend your time solving and analyzing selected positions that offer the opportunity to employ tactical themes. The chessercizes in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 are designed for this purpose, and for further practice, we recommend *Chess Tactics for the Tournament Player* by Grandmasters Lev Alburt and Sam Palatnik.

A brief disclaimer. Chess is infinitely rewarding precisely because it is the world's most demanding game. Or, as one writer put it, chess is "the gymnasium of the mind." Even an epochal genius such as Robert Fischer commits errors, a few of them serious. After solving many of the chessercizes in this book, you will notice that although you often recognize tactical themes in practice at home, you overlook them during actual games.

Don't worry. Your success rate is higher when solving chessercizes because you are certain in advance that a winning idea is present, and you frequently know the theme involved. During a game, you seldom have a high degree of certainty that a given motif is possible. Further, unless an opponent leads with his chin by making a bad blunder, you must create opportunity rather than merely recognize it when solving positions given in a book.

Chess is like golf. You can hook a drive into another fairway, chip back and forth over nearly every green, three-putt until your stomach churns—and then repair to the clubhouse in complete contentment after holing out a 30-yard approach shot. Because golf and chess are rough and tough, doing something right erases all of the earlier frustration.

Let's look at some more tactical themes.

DEFLECTION

Many games come down to a moment when the opponent hangs on by the skin of his chessmen. He is guarding everything, if barely. That is when ***deflection***—forcing an enemy man from its position so as to leave another man or square unguarded—becomes possible. Deflection amounts to removing an opponent's guard or defense of a specific point. Take a look at this position between two amateurs:

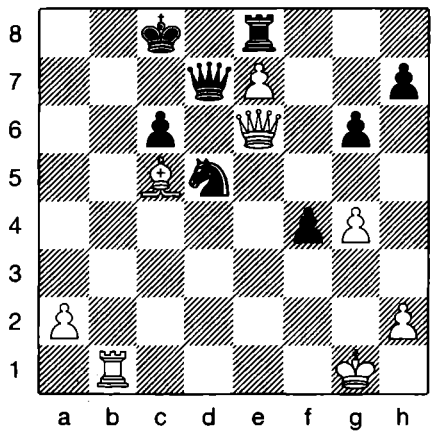


DIAGRAM 78

WHITE TO MOVE

Although material is even in the above position, Black barely has his nose above water. His King is open to attack, and his Queen and Rook are without scope and tied down to defense. Indeed, Black's King is also playing a defensive role by guarding the Queen. Enter the concept of deflection. White can force Black to remove his guard on the Queen by 1. Rb8+! Kc7 (Black is still holding on) 2. Rb7+! Kxb7 (the alternative is 2. ... Kc8 3. Qxd7 mate) 3. Qxd7+, and White wins.

The immortal deflection game, which some scholars believe was composed by the great Mexican master Carlos Torre (1905–1978), was "played" at New Orleans in 1920 and published in 1925. The "winner" was

a friend and teacher of Torre's. Here is the beginning position of this stunning deflection inspiration:

EDWIN Z. ADAMS – CARLOS TORRE

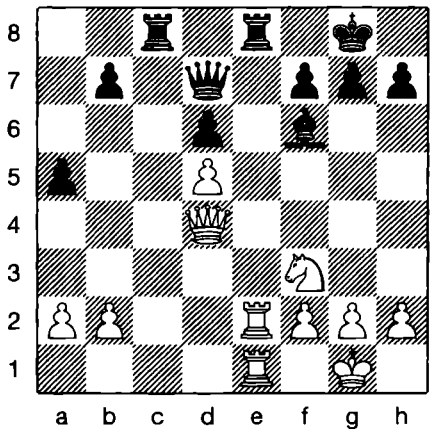


DIAGRAM 79

WHITE TO MOVE

Black's Rook at e8 is both attacked and guarded twice. White's brilliant series of Queen offers, employing the theme of deflection, destroys this balance. Remember: If the Black Queen were not guarding the Rook on e8, then White would checkmate by 1. Rxe8+ Rxe8 2. Rxe8 mate.

1. Qg4! Qb5

Black must keep his Queen on the a4-e8 diagonal. If 1. ... Qxg4, then White finishes with 2. Rxe8+ Rxe8 3. Rxe8 mate. The retreat, 1. ... Qd8, is refuted by 2. Qxc8 Qxc8 3. Rxe8+ Qxe8 4. Rxe8 mate. If Black tries to bail out with 1. ... Rxe2, then White wins decisive material with 2. Qxd7 because his Knight guards the Rook on e1.

2. Qc4!!

A stunning move with several more still to come!

2. ... Qd7

If Black tries either 2. ... Rxc4 or 2. ... Qxc4, White forces mate as before with 3. Rxe8+.

3. Qc7!!

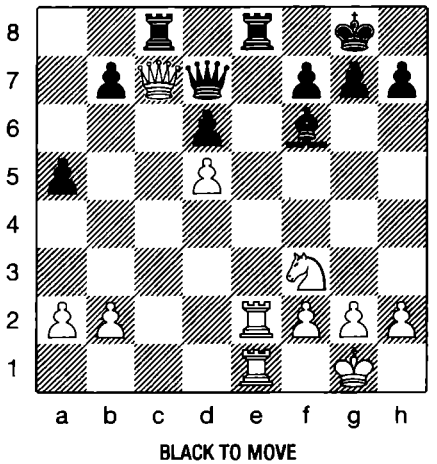


DIAGRAM 80

BLACK TO MOVE

3. ... Qb5

By now, the central question is whether White can force or deflect the Black Queen from the a4-e8 diagonal. Once again, Black cannot take the Queen on c7 because of White's Rxe8+. And once again, the idea of ... Rxe2 is answered by Qxd7, when White's Knight guards the Rook on e1.

4. a4!

A premature move is 4. Qxb7 because of 4. ... Qxe2! 5. Rxe2 Rc1+, forcing mate. The text move is designed to prepare for Qxb7 by removing with tempo White's Rook from e2.

4. ... **Qxa4**

5. **Re4**

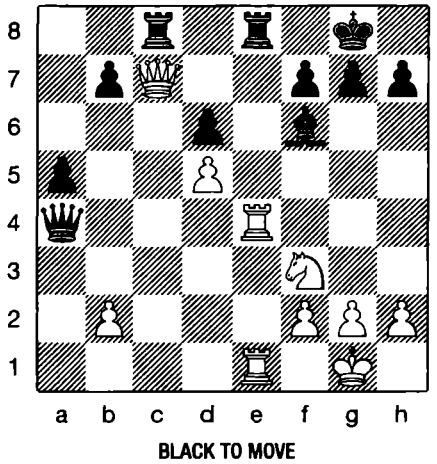


DIAGRAM 81

BLACK TO MOVE

5. ... **Qb5**

White's deflection maneuvers are designed to take away one square after another along the a4-e8 diagonal from the Black Queen. In fact, Black has only one square left—b5, to which he shifts his lady. Other tries are also hopeless. On 5. ... Rxe4, White forces mate after 6. Qxc8+, and if 5. ... Qxe4 6. Rxe4, Black cannot play 6. ... Rxc7 because of 7. Rxe8 mate.

6. **Qxb7!!** **Black resigns**

Phew! The Black Queen has run out of safe squares along the a4-h8 diagonal. The thematic conclusion would be 6. ... Qxb7 7. Rxe8+ Rxe8 8. Rxe8 mate.

THE DECOY

A kissing cousin to deflection is the ***decoy***, which is a tactic designed to lure an enemy unit to a desired square. Here is an unquestionable decoy in which a King that is guarding nothing is lured to a fatal rendezvous:

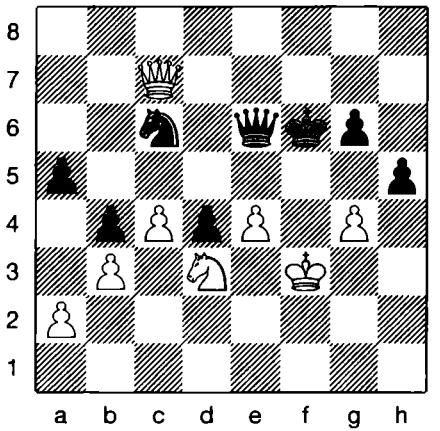


DIAGRAM 82

WHITE TO MOVE

Material is even, and White appears to have no immediate way to make progress. Still, an alert player will notice that the Black King has very few available squares. To wit: one, g5. Is there some way to decoy or lure the King to this square and administer checkmate? Ah, the trick is 1. g5+ Kxg5 2. Qf4 mate.

Not all decoys are quite so pure, and chess authorities would argue whether the following stunning move represents the theme of deflection or decoy:

PYOTR ROMANOVSKY – AMATEUR
SOVIET UNION, 1936

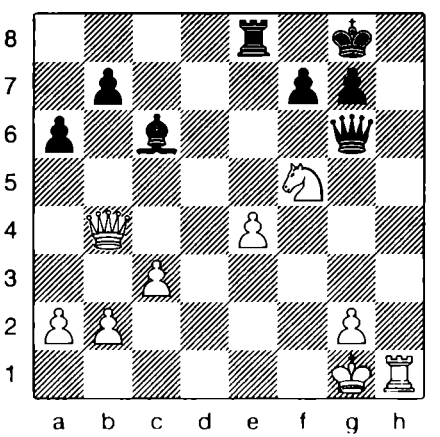


DIAGRAM 83

WHITE TO MOVE

Do you see the winning shot? That's right: 1. Qf8+!!. The King cannot move to the h-file because of White's Rook on h1, and so depending on how one looks at these things, White has either decoyed the King to f8 or deflected it from guarding h8 with 1. ... Kxf8 2. Rh8 mate. The same goes for the Rook: It is either deflected from guarding e7 or decoyed to f8 after 1. ... Rxf8 2. Ne7 mate. Or you can say quite correctly that the Rook is both deflected and decoyed.

OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction is a tactical theme in which you oblige an opponent to place one of his own pieces on a given square, with the idea in some cases of preventing another enemy man from occupying that square. In the following example, Black wishes to keep White's King off f2.

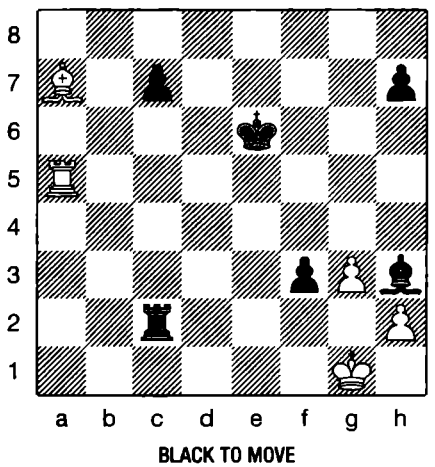


DIAGRAM 84

BLACK TO MOVE

If there were a White pawn on f2, Black could play 1. ... Rc1 mate, but in the above position, 1. ... Rc1+ is answered by 2. Kf2. So Black cannot force mate, but he can win a piece by the obstruction sacrifice, 1. ... f2+, forcing White to occupy f2 with 2. Bxf2 (if 2. Kh1, then 2. ... Rc1 mate). White's King no longer has an escape square on f2, and Black will eventually win after 2. ... Rc1+ 3. Be1 Rxe1+.

IN-BETWEEN MOVE

Strictly speaking, an in-between move (given in many chess books by its German name, ***zwischenzug***) is a tactical device rather than a theme. Such a move may itself be a double attack, a discovery and so on; it is usually played to help execute an otherwise unwise tactical theme. When an in-between move is also a check, it is called an ***in-between check*** or, as given in many chess books, ***zwischenschach.***

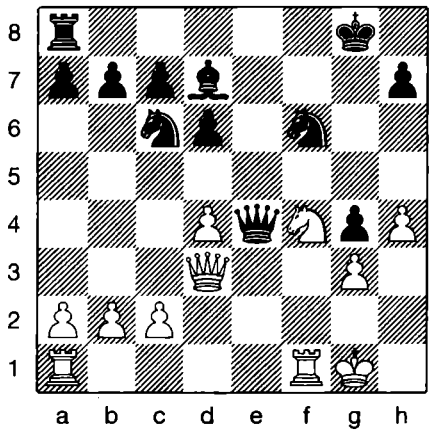


DIAGRAM 85

WHITE TO MOVE

White plays 1. Nh5 with the idea of deflecting the f6-Knight from defense of the Queen after 1. ... Nxh5 2. Qxe4. Black responds with 1. ... Qxd3, intending to win a piece after 2. cxd3 (a seemingly automatic capture) 2. ... Nxh5. But the grain of sand in Black's spiritual spinach is the in-between check, 2. Nxf6+, winning easily after 2. ... K-moves 3. cxd3. Therefore, White's deflection idea was the right one when aided by the in-between check.

BATTERIES

A ***battery*** consists of two or more pieces of like power—say, a Queen and Rook or Queen and Bishop—positioned so that they can support each other along the same line of attack. As with in-between moves, batteries are tactical devices rather than themes. They help in executing a tactical theme such as exploiting a double attack. In addition to the example of Queen and Bishop shown below, another obvious battery is a Queen and Rook arrayed along an open file so that they attack an enemy piece pinned on the opponent's King:

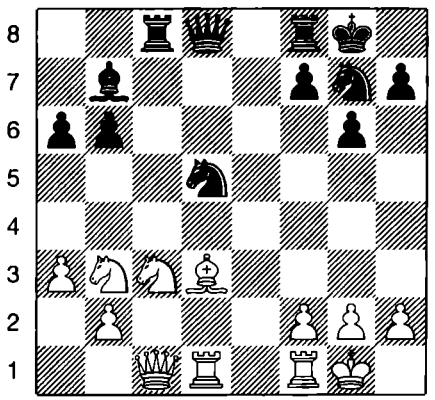


DIAGRAM 86

BLACK TO MOVE

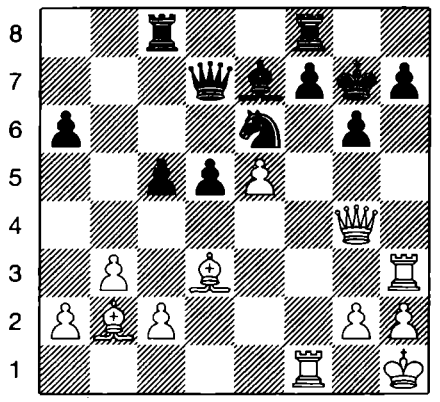
Material is even, but Black sees a way to gain a decisive advantage through a double attack, 1. ... Nxc3 2. bxc3 Qd5. Black threatens both 3. ... Qxb3, winning a piece, or 3. ... Qxg2 mate, winning the game immediately. What gives teeth to this double attack is the battery of Queen and Bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal. Without this interaction between the Black Queen and Bishop, White could simply move his Knight on b3 or guard it with his Queen. Chess wags call this sort of thing "assault by battery."

ANNIHILATION OF DEFENSE

Another common tactical device is ***annihilation of defense,*** which is the stripping away—almost always by sacrifices—of an opponent's men supporting a crucial square.

JONATHON BERRY–VIESTURS SEGLINS

DIAGRAM 87

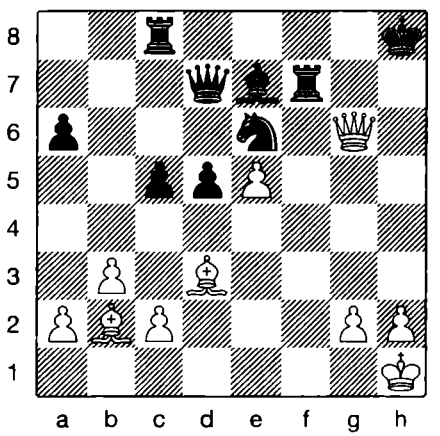


WHITE TO MOVE

In the best of all possible worlds, White would like to play 1. Qxg6+ Kh8 2. Qxh7 mate. But Black simply replies with 1. ... hxg6 or 1. ... fxg6, when White is down a Queen. The solution is to annihilate the defense of g6 by hitting the pawn cover:

1. **Rxh7+!** **Kxh7**
2. **Rxf7+!** **Rxf7**
3. **Qxg6+** **Kh8**

DIAGRAM 88



For a moment, White is down two Rooks for three pawns, but his decision

to invest massive material to strip away the protection of g6 is completely sound. He wins very quickly:

4. Qxf7

The battery of Queen and Bishop threaten 5. Qh7 mate.

4. ... Ng5

Attacking White's Queen and defending against the mate on h7.

5. e6+

A discovered check and/or double attack because of the additional threat of exd7.

5. ... d4

Closing off the discovery.

6. Qh5+

That's right, an in-between check that removes the Queen from attack.

6. ... K-moves

7. exd7, and White wins

Notice how the tactical device of annihilating the defense made possible the successful use of a battery and in-between check, not to mention the tactical themes of discovery and double attack.

REVIEW OF ADVANCED TACTICAL THEMES AND DEVICES	
Deflection	Forcing an enemy man from its position so as to leave another man or square undefended.
The Decoy	Luring an enemy unit to a desired square.
Obstruction	Obliging an opponent to place one of his own pieces on a given square.
In-Between Move	A tactical device to aid in the execution of what otherwise may be an unwise tactical theme.
Battery	When two or more pieces of like power support each other in an attack along the same line.
Annihilation of Defense	Stripping away an opponent's support of a crucial square.

5 Advanced Tactical Chessercizes

BY NOW YOU HAVE DONE QUITE A BIT of chessercizing and are beginning to tone your knowledge of tactical themes and develop a capacity to recognize these themes.

The chessercizes in this chapter are arranged according to theme, and they progress in difficulty within each theme section. Deflections come first, followed by decoys, obstruction, in-between moves, batteries and annihilation of defense.

In this chapter we continue to sound a frustration alert. Although several of the chessercizes will pose little difficulty, others are just a tad playful and cruel. Yes, cruel. They are supposed to prompt private pounding of tables and searching of chess souls.

Our advice is not to spend more than five to 10 minutes on any single chessercize. Go on to the next challenge. Later, you can return to the positions that defeated your earlier efforts and try again.

We cannot stress one point strongly enough: These chessercizes are not intended to test but to inform. If many of them withstand your maximum effort, then don't worry. Consult the solutions with a clear conscience and discover what you missed. The good news is that none of these positions will elude understanding once you know the solution.

A second crucial point is that, while you will eventually wind up solving very elaborate tactical positions, you may still overlook much simpler opportunities during actual games. After patting yourself on the back for spotting in some book quiz a long sequence of moves involving two or three tactical themes, you will miss an elementary one-mover when facing an opponent. Never forget that in the following chessercizes you know in advance that opportunity beckons. By definition you are on the alert. In a real game, you must create opportunities before you can exploit them; there is often uncertainty about whether the ploy you choose is a fat chance or a thin reed. Knowing the difference comes with experience, and players refer to such inferences from experience as "chess intuition."

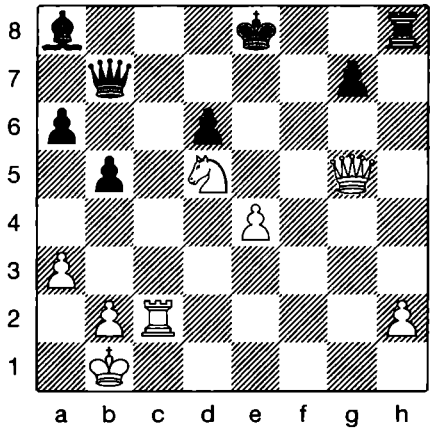


DIAGRAM 89

1. White to move.
A deflection that needs little reflection.

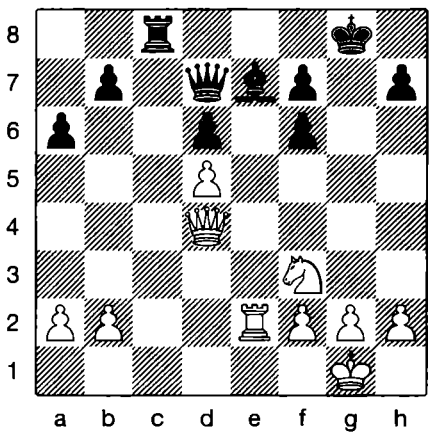


DIAGRAM 90

2. White to move. Deflect and then double up.

ANSWERS

1. In Fischer–Soos (Skopje, 1967), the great American world champion completely outplayed his opponent, and as is so often the case in chess, he was able to cash in with a neat shot, 1. Rc8+. Black resigned because of 1. ... Qxc8 2. Qe7 mate. And if 1. ... Kf7, then 2. Qf5 mate.

2. Deflection comes first: 1. Rxe7 Qxe7. Then comes a double attack: 2. Qg4+, hitting the King and the Rook on c8. Notice how White's Rook sacrifice removed the Queen's ability to guard both the Rook and the g4 checking square.

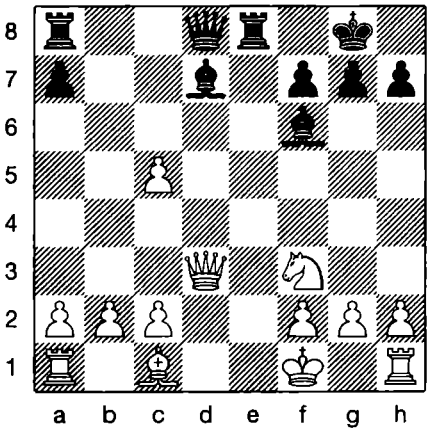


DIAGRAM 91

3. Black to move. White is up three pawns, but Black is up a ....

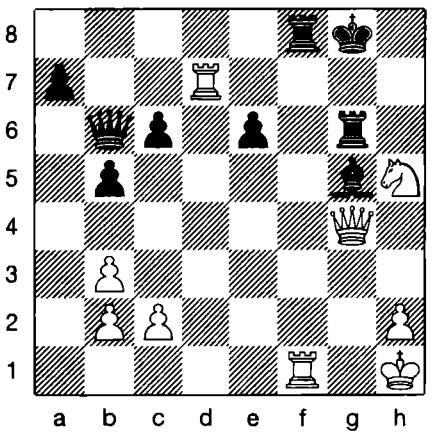


DIAGRAM 92

4. White to move. King sting.

ANSWERS

3. Black finishes up a King or Queen depending on how White wishes to defend. The deflection idea is 1. ... Bb5!, pinning the White Queen on the King. Unfortunately, the first player cannot try 2. c4 (White loses one move sooner with 2. Qxb5) 2. ... Bxc4 3. Qxc4 Qd1+ 4. Ne1 Qxe1 mate. To avoid mate, White could try, say, 2. Be3 Bxd3+, when Black should win easily. A good example of how superior development tells. Although White has three extra pawns, he is currently down two undeveloped Rooks and a Bishop.

4. The sting is 1. Qxe6+! (ouch!), deflecting the Rook on g6 from the defense of g7 (if 1. ... Rxe6, then 2. Rg7+ Kh8 3. Rxf8 mate). Of course, if 1. ... Kh8, then White mates soon after 2. Rxf8+.

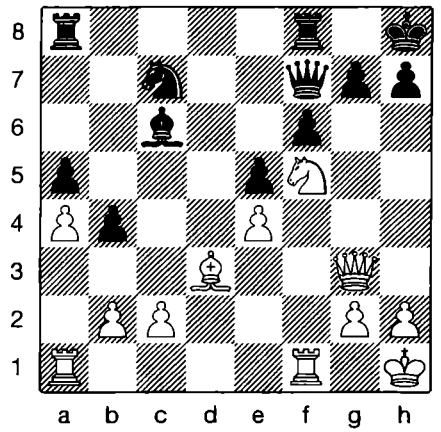


DIAGRAM 93

5. White to move. Finesse the lady.

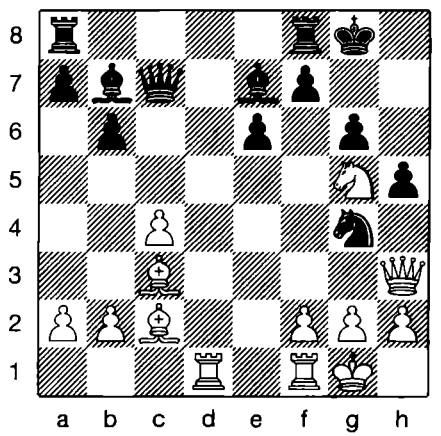


DIAGRAM 94

6. White to move. A deflection that requires a little detection.

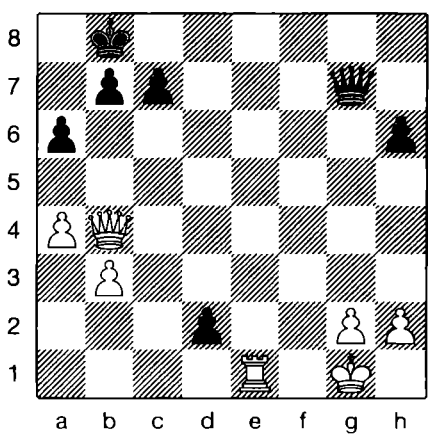


DIAGRAM 95

7. Black to move. Is 1. ... dxe1=Q+ the strongest move?

ANSWERS

5. Without Black's Queen guarding g7, White could play Qxg7 mate. The "obvious" idea is 1. Bc4 because 1. ... Qxc4 is answered by 2. Qxg7 mate, and 1. ... Qd7 is met by 2. Rad1, driving the Queen from the seventh rank. But 1. ... Qg6 keeps g7 under surveillance. Did you see that White wanted to finesse the lady to g6 because of 2. Qxg6 hxg6 3. Rf3 gxf5 4. Rh3 mate?

6. White wants to play 1. Qxh5 gxh5 2. Bh7 mate, but the fly in the ointment is 1. ... Qxh2+ 2. Qxh2 Nxh2, when Black is still in the game. Do you see the solution? The answer is 1. Rd7!!, attacking Black's Queen and Bishop and deflecting the Queen after 1. ... Qxd7 (there is nothing much better) 2. Qxh5 gxh5 3. Bh7 mate. White in this game was Vera Menchik, women's world champion from 1927 until her death in 1944 during the German bombing of London. Her opponent, Sonja Graf, was Menchik's only important distaff rival.

7. No! After 1. ... dxe1=Q+ 2. Qxe1, the position is very drawish. Black can win immediately by 1. ... Qd4+ 2. Qxd4 dxe1=Q mate.

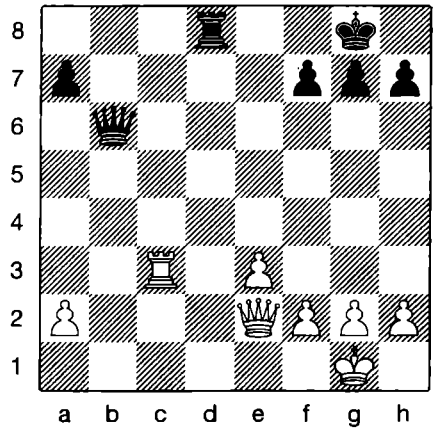


DIAGRAM 96

8. Black to move. Is 1. ... Qb2 or 1. ... Qb1+ the better move?

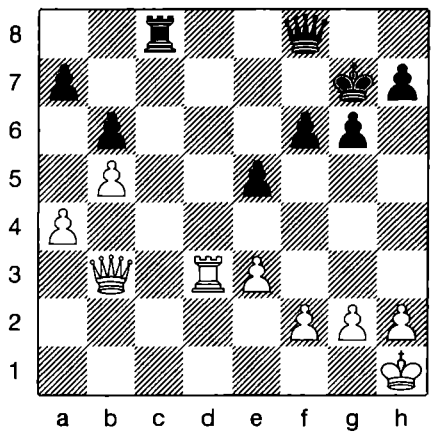


DIAGRAM 97

9. Black to move. Think twice.

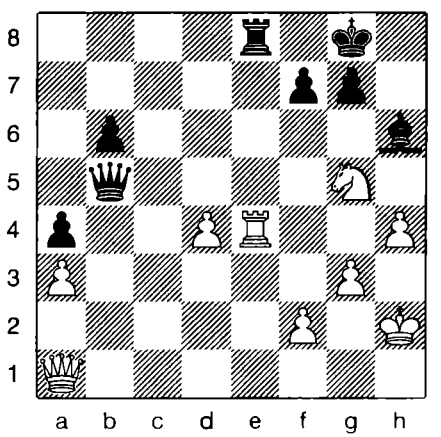


DIAGRAM 98

10. White to move. Frustration alert.

ANSWERS

8. At first glance, Black appears to win fairly easily after 1. ... Qb1+ 2. Qf1 Rd1. A second glance shows 3. Rc8+ Rd8 4. Rxd8 mate. The (much) better move is 1. ... Qb2!!, played in Bernstein–Capablanca (Moscow, 1914). Jose Capablanca, the player with the Black pieces, was world champion from 1921 to 1927 and renowned for his play in seemingly simple positions with few pieces. White resigned because 2. Qxb2 is met by 2. ... Rd1 mate, and the first player has no way to protect both his Queen and Rook. If 2. Qe1, then 2. ... Qxc3 3. Qxc3 Rd1+ 4. Qe1 Rxe1 mate, and if 2. Rc2, then 2. ... Qb1+ 3. Qf1 Qxc2, winning a Rook. White's most amusing try is 2. Qd3, answering 2. ... Rxd3 with 3. Rc8+, followed by mate. But Black still wins by 2. ... Qa1+! 3. Qf1 Qxc3, once again snaring a Rook.

9. Think twice. After the two preceding examples, the unwary might try 1. ... Qb4, expecting 2. Qxb4 Rc1+, forcing mate in two. But White can keep the game going after either 2. Qd1 or 2. Rd7+ and 3. Qd1. The most accurate path is 1. ... Rc1+ 2. Rd1 Qb4! 3. Qd3 Qe1+! 4. Rxe1 Rxe1 winning. Or if 4. Qf1, then Black wins by 4. ... Rxd1.

10. You may have seen 1. Qb1!, intending 1. ... Qxb1 2. Rxe8 mate, but did you work out the complications after 1. ... Qc6 2. d5 Qd7, when Black still has his Rook under surveillance? The beautiful sockdolager is 3. Re7!!, when such responses as 3. ... Rxe7 and 3. ... Qxe7 are met by 4. Qh7+ Kf8 5. Qh8 mate. The defense 3. ... Qd8 is crushed by 4. Qh7+ Kf8 5. Rxf7 mate. The Black King no longer has an escape hatch by way of e7. White's idea of taking away squares from Black's Queen along the a4-e8 diagonal is identical in concept with the Adams–Torre position given in Diagram 79.

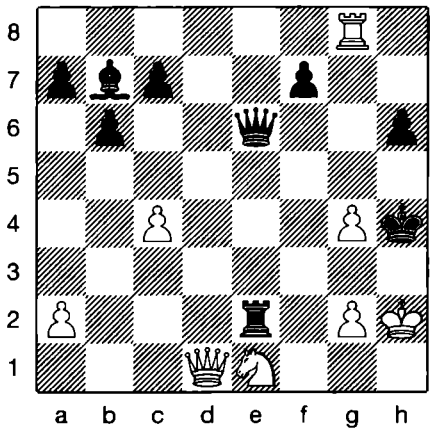


DIAGRAM 99

11. White to move. Short and tricky.

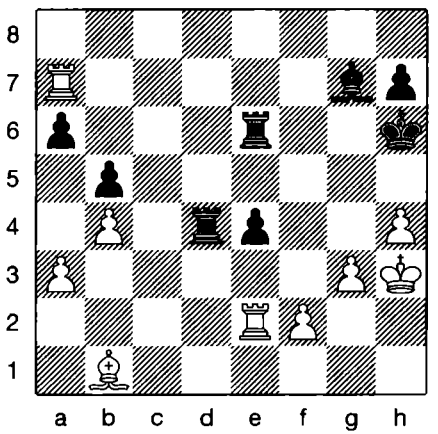


DIAGRAM 100

12. White to move. The center can't hold.

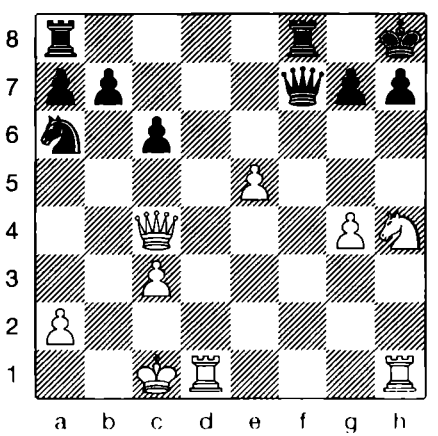


DIAGRAM 101

13. White to move. Minor master, major move.

ANSWERS

11. Short, tricky, and we should have said frustrating. The winning idea is 1. Nf3+ Bxf3. The point behind White's first move is to free the e1-square for 2. Qe1+!! Rxe1 (forced) 3. g3 mate. That's right: White deflected the Rook from the second rank so that the pinned g-pawn could deliver checkmate.

12. In Rubinstein–Gruenfeld (Semmering, 1926), White transformed what appeared to be a lengthy win based on an extra pawn into a speedy victory thanks to a marvelously hidden bit of deflection: 1. Bxe4!! Rdxe4 (if Black does not capture the Bishop, then he will be down two pawns with a sure loss) 2. Rxe4 Rxe4 3. Rxa6+. White has deflected the Rook on e6 from the guard of the a-pawn, but he has also lost a piece after 3. ... Kh5. But White now inched forward the modest 4. f3!, and Black resigned. The threat is 5. g4+ Rxg4 6. fxg4 mate. Mate can only be prevented by the obviously inadequate 4. ... Rxh4+. Akiba Rubinstein (1882–1961) has been called the Spinoza of Chess because of the many deep and unexpected ideas in his games. A world championship candidate before World War I, he was a spiritual if not physical victim of that struggle. In the postwar years, he lost his steadiness, playing ever more brilliantly and at times foolishly, finally retiring from chess in the early 1930s.

13. In Gottschall–Amateur (1901), White won brilliantly by 1. Rdf1!! Qxc4 (the alternative is 1. ... Qe8 to keep guard on the g6 square for the moment, but 2. Rxf8+ Qxf8 3. Ng6 is mate) 2. Ng6+ Kg8 3. Ne7+ Kh8 4. Rxh7+! Kxh7 5. Rh1 mate. Hermann von Gottschall (1862–1933) was a minor German master better known for his chess writing than his playing. How well will you one day play chess? There is no reason why you cannot play as well as a Gottschall and experience the joy of conceiving moves such as 1. Rdf1!! and 4. Rxh7+!.

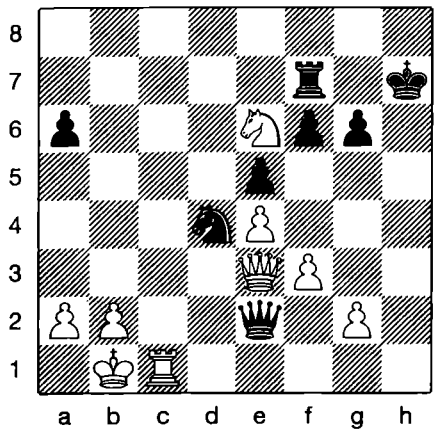


DIAGRAM 102

14. White to move. A stunning decoy.

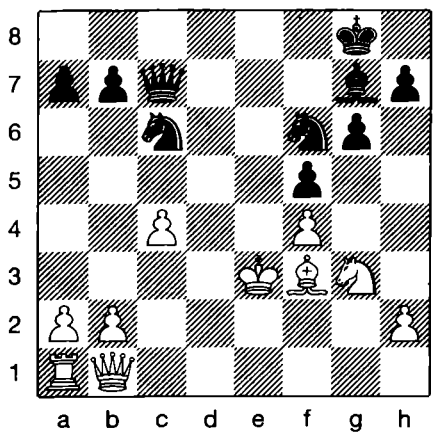


DIAGRAM 103

15. Black to move. Snap the trap.

ANSWERS

14. The Black King is the target. In Spassky–Korchnoi (Leningrad, 1968), White got a chance to play 1. Qh6+!, a decoy sacrifice. On 1. ... Kxh6, White finishes with 2. Rh1 mate. And if 1. ... Kg8, the finish is 2. Qxg6+ Kh8 3. Rh1+ Rh7 4. Rxh7 mate. The winner of this game is Boris Spassky, world champion from 1969 to 1972 and loser to Bobby Fischer of "the chess match of the century" in Reykjavik, Iceland.

15. At the 1960 Leipzig Olympiad, Bobby Fischer defeated Chile's Rene Letelier after 1. ... Qxf4+!!, decoying the White King into mate after 2. Kxf4 Bh6. Rather than face this humiliation or decisive loss of material in other variations, Letelier resigned.

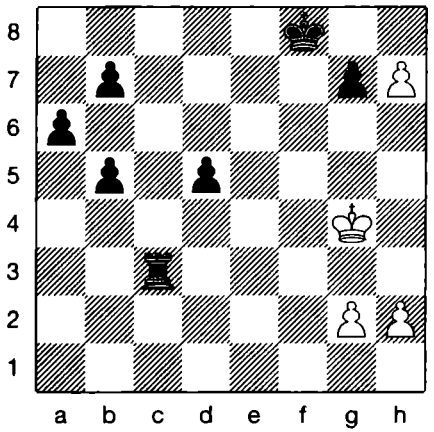


DIAGRAM 104

16. Black to move. Who is winning?

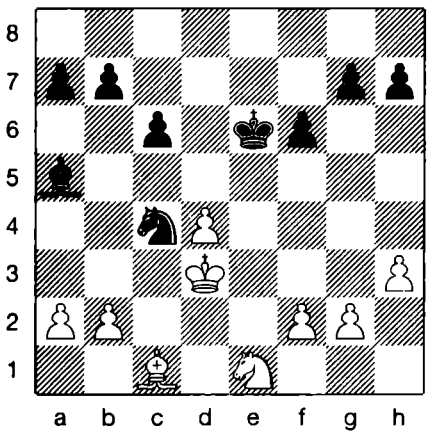


DIAGRAM 105

17. White to move. Both Knights are under attack, so ....

ANSWERS

16. Black is winning. But how? White threatens h8=Q+. The answer is 1. ... Rc4+ 2. Kh3 Rh4+!! (the decoy) 3. Kxh4 (otherwise Black simply takes the h-pawn) 3. ... g5+ 4. Kxg5 Kg7, and Black wins. From Emanuel Lasker–Rudolf Loman (London, 1903).

17. In this position from Emanuel Lasker–Max Euwe (Nottingham, 1936), Black has just played the blunder 1. ... Bc7-a5??, attacking the Knight on e1 but overlooking 2. b4! (a decoy) 2. ... Bxb4 (forced) 3. Nc2. White wins either the Knight or Bishop. Euwe (1901–1981) was world champion at the time this game was played. Lasker (1868–1941) was the titleholder from 1894 to 1921.

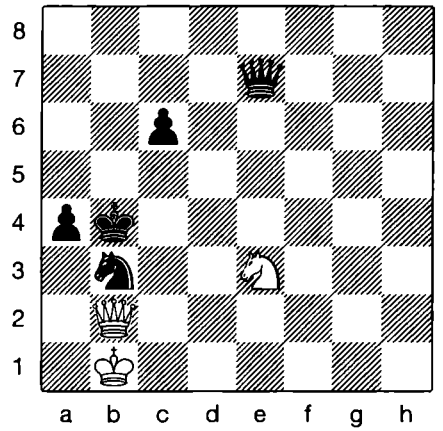


DIAGRAM 106

18. White to move. Coy decoy.

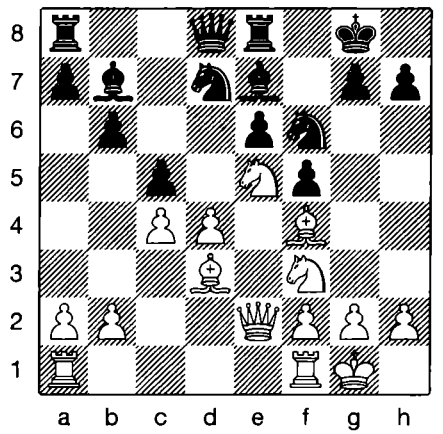


DIAGRAM 107

19. White to move. Regicide.

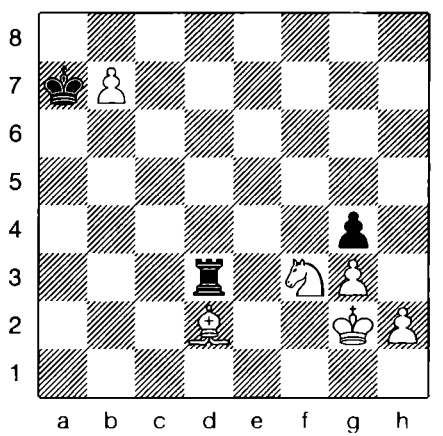


DIAGRAM 108

20. White to move. Time.

ANSWERS

18. White's 1. Qa3+!! has been called a coy decoy, for this deadly move occurs in what appears to be the most innocent of situations. If Black retreats his King, then White wins the Queen by 2. Qxe7; if 1. ... Kxa3, then 2. Nc2 mate!. This position occurs near the conclusion of an endgame study by K.A.L. Kubbel (1892–1942), one of the greatest of chess composers. He died of starvation during the siege of Leningrad.

19. Played in a military hospital in Tarnopol on the Eastern Front during 1916, the game Alekhine–von Feldt features one of the most surprising moves ever played, 1. Nf7!!, attacking the Queen and also threatening 2. Qxe6 (the idea being 3. Nh6+ Kh8 4. Qg8+ Rxg8 5. Nf7 mate). But the real point is what happens if Black allows his King to be decoyed by 1. ... Kxf7, when there follows the amazing 2. Qxe6+, a second decoy sacrifice that cannot be accepted because of 2. ... Kxe6 3. Ng5 mate. Black tried 2. ... Kg6, whereupon Alekhine, who was playing blindfolded, announced mate in two after 3. g4 Be4 4. Nh4. Alexander Alekhine was world chess champion from 1927 to 1935 and from 1937 to 1946. He was renowned for his tactical ability.

20. White is under a double attack: If his Knight moves, then the Bishop goes; if his Bishop moves, then 1. ... gxf3+. He can escape these toils by gaining time with 1. b8=Q+, the idea being to decoy the Black King to b8 after 1. ... Kxb8, when White has 2. Bf4+ followed by a reasonable Knight move. Some players would classify 1. b8=Q+ as an in-between check (*zwischenschach*) rather than a decoy sacrifice.

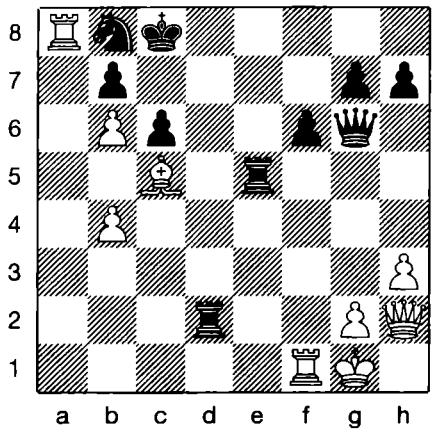


DIAGRAM 109

21. White to move. Two zaps.

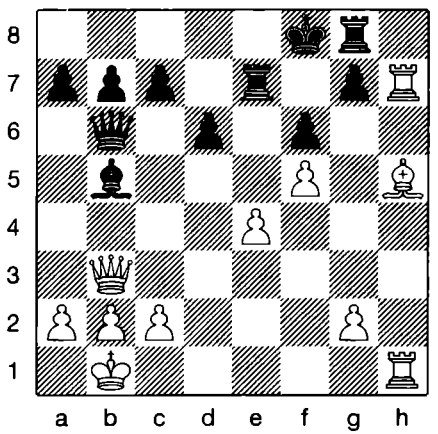


DIAGRAM 110

22. White to move. Lure Black into your mating web.

ANSWERS

21. From Alekhine–Reshevsky (Kemeri, 1937). By zapping two of Black's pieces, White can win quite quickly. The solution is 1. Rxb8+! (decoying Black's King to b8) 1. ... Kxb8 2. Qxe5+!. The second sacrifice is meant to clear the f-file after 2. ... fxe5 3. Rf8+ Qe8 4. Rxe8, with mate next move. Samuel Reshevsky (1911–1992), the loser of this game, was a many-time U.S. chess champion. Many chess writers believe he was the world's strongest player from about 1945 to 1955, though he never had a chance to play a title match.

22. In Kirilov–Tavisov (Soviet Union, 1960), the Black King was decoyed to its doom after 1. Qxg8+ Kxg8 2. Rh8+ Kxh8 3. Bf7 mate. Notice that the mating move is also a discovered check.

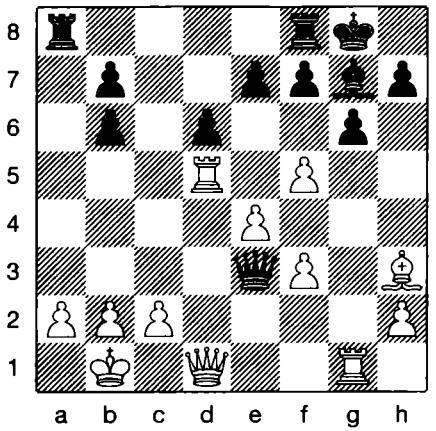


DIAGRAM 111

23. Black to move. Double decoy.

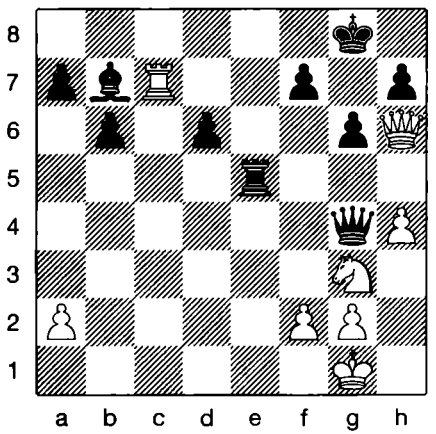


DIAGRAM 112

24. Black to move. Repeat decoy.

ANSWERS

23. In Vitko–Pupols (Portland, 1978), Black surrendered two Rooks just to decoy the White King to the a1-square: 1. ... Rxa2! 2. Kxa2 (White has to take the Rook and hope, since the threat is 2. ... Rxb2+; immediately fatal is either 2. b3 Ra1 mate or 2. c3 Rxb2+ 3. Kxb2 Qxc3+ and mate next move) 2. ... Ra8+ 3. Kb1 Ra1+!! 4. Kxa1 Qa3+ (did you notice the pin along the a1-h8 diagonal?). It is mate after 5. Kb1 Qxb2.

24. The same basic idea as in the previous example—a kind of repeat decoy. Black wins by 1. ... Re1+ 2. Kh2 (if 2. Nf1, then 2. ... Qxg2 mate) 2. ... Rh1+! 3. Kxh1 Qh3+ (the same pinning idea as in the previous diagram) 4. Kg1 Qxg2 mate.

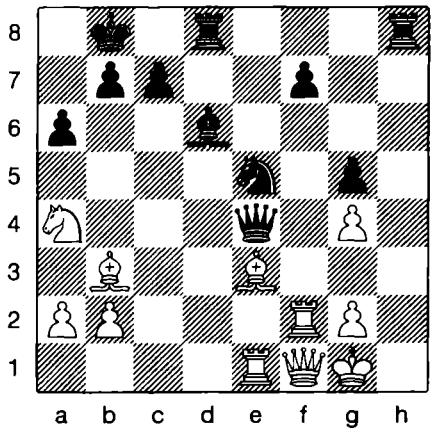


DIAGRAM 113

25. Black to move. Frustration alert.

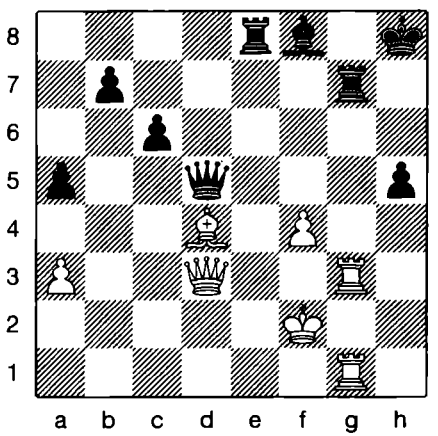


DIAGRAM 114

26. Can Black play 1. ... Bc5?

ANSWERS

25. Frustration alert. We hope that you eventually found 1. ... Rh1+ 2. Kxh1 Qh7+ 3. Kg1 Qh2+!! (a second decoy) 4. Kxh2 Nf3+ (a double discovered check) 5. Kh1 Rh8 mate. From Komov–Sidorov (Soviet Union, 1952).

26. No. Although Black does not have an adequate defense, he loses quickly and brilliantly after 1. ... Bc5 2. Qh7+!! (the idea is to decoy the King to h7, where it will be in check after a Rook capture) 2. ... Kxh7 3. Rxg7+ Kh8 4. Rg8+ Kh7 5. R1g7+ Kh6 6. Rg6+ Kh7 7. R8g7+ Kh8 8. Rh6 mate.

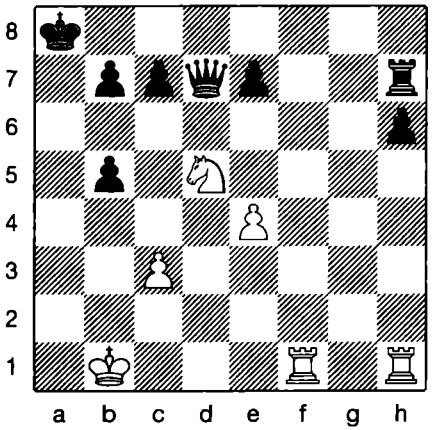


DIAGRAM 115

27. White to move. Be an obstructionist!

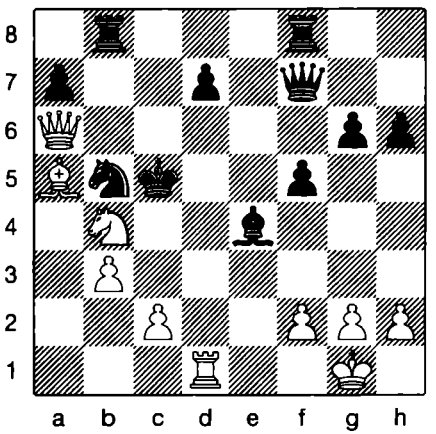


DIAGRAM 116

28. White to move. Block a square, free a square.

ANSWERS

27. Do you see a way for White to slay the Black monarch? The idea is to obstruct the enemy King with his own pieces: 1. Nb6+ cxb6 (otherwise Black drops his Queen) 2. Rf8+ Ka7 3. Kc2, with the deadly threat of 4. Ra1 mate. The points behind 1. Nb6+ were to fill up the b6 square and to prevent Black's pawn on b7 from moving.

28. Short and difficult: 1. Qc6+!! dxc6 (Black's pawn now occupies c6) 2. Na6 mate. White's first move also freed a6 for the Knight.

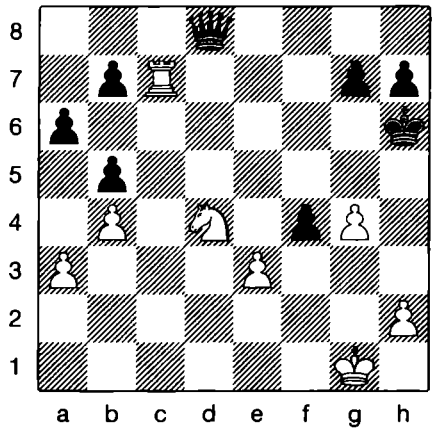


DIAGRAM 117

29. White to move. Is it possible to mate in two?

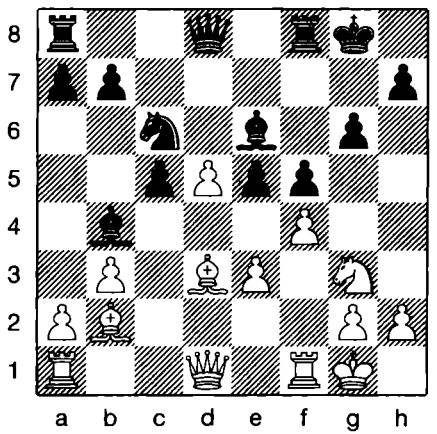


DIAGRAM 118

30. Black to move. Which is better, 1. ... Bxd5 or 1. ... Qxd5?

ANSWERS

29. Yes, it is possible—though not forced—to mate in two by 1. Rxg7!! (an authentic bolt from the blue) and 2. Nf5. Black has no good way to prevent this threat. On 1. ... Kxg7, White forks King and Queen by 2. Ne6+; on 1. ... Qxd4, White has a certain win with 2. Rxh7+ (an in-between check) 2. ... Kxh7 3. exd4. White's passed pawns will win easily.

30. The better move is 1. ... Bxd5, when Black stands worse but can still put up a fight. On 1. ... Qxd5, White wins a piece with 2. Bc4 Qxd1 3. Bxe6+ (an in-between check that cashes in) and 4. Raxd1. The "automatic" recapture by 3. Raxd1 gives Black the chance to avoid loss of a piece by 3. ... Bxc4. From Miguel Najdorf–Paul Keres (Los Angeles, 1963).

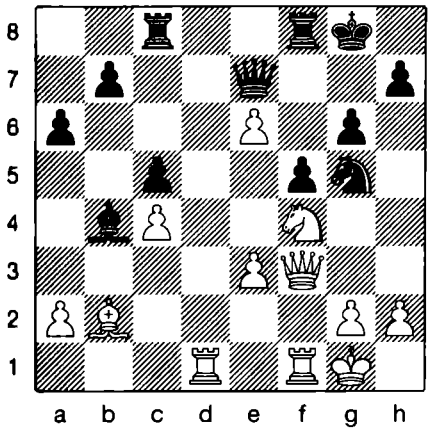


DIAGRAM 119

31. White to move. Not all batteries are vertical or horizontal.

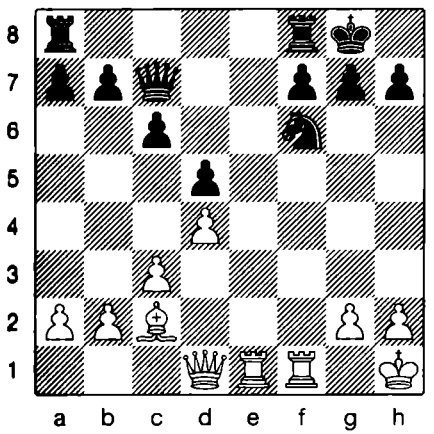


DIAGRAM 120

32. White to move. A classic annihilation.

ANSWERS

31. In Najdorf–Keres (Los Angeles, 1963), White exploited the long a1-h8 diagonal with a Queen and Bishop battery. Play continued 1. Qd5 (removing the Queen from attack and preparing the following maneuver) 1. ... Rc6 2. Qe5 Nxe6 3. Qh8+ Kf7 4. Qxh7+ Ke8 5. Qxe7+ Kxe7 6. Nxg6+ (a fork) 6. ... Ke8 7. Nxf8 Nxf8 8. Rxf5, and Black soon resigned.

32. The most common annihilation of defense is probably the sacrifice of Rook for Knight on f6 or f3, followed by an attack against h7 or h2. In this instance the winning line is 1. Rxf6 gxf6 2. Qg4+ (the obvious 2. Qd3 is not so good after 2. ... f5 3. Qxf5 f6, when Black suddenly has his Queen guarding h7!) 2. ... Kh8 3. Qf5 with mate coming on h7.

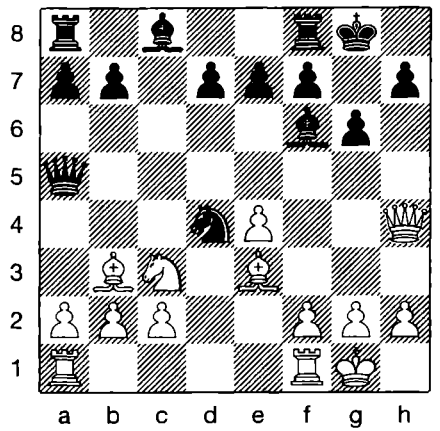


DIAGRAM 121

33. White played 1. Qxf6!!?. Can Black win a tempo here?

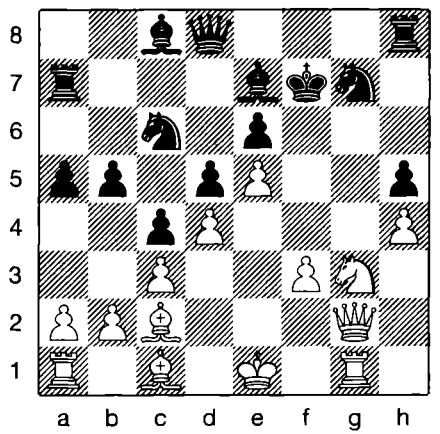


DIAGRAM 122

34. After 1. Nxh5, what should Black do?

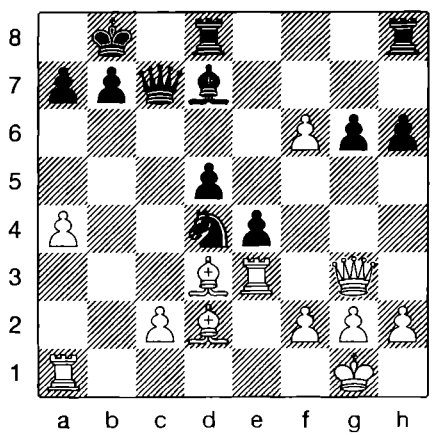


DIAGRAM 123

35. After 1. Rxe4 Qxg3, what is White's best move?

ANSWERS

33. This position is from Nezhmetdinov–Chernikov (Rostov-on-Don, 1962). The Queen sacrifice by 1. Qxf6!!? is highly controversial, and there is no final verdict on its soundness. Black's best defense is to win a tempo by 1. ... Ne2+ (another in-between check) 2. Nxe2 exf6 3. Nc3. The alternative of 1. ... exf6 permits White to gang up on the f6-pawn immediately by 2. Bxd4 and 3. Nd5, since the White Knight does not lose time by moving to e2 and back again to c3. See page 141 for the complete game.

34. After 1. Nxh5, which occurred in Spielmann–Nimzovich (New York, 1927), Black looks to be in bad shape. After 1. ... Nxh5, White continues 2. Qg6+ Kf8 3. Bh6+ Rxh6 4. Qg8 mate. Black's problem is that although he is up material, his King cannot escape by way of e7 and d7. All of which led the Black player to hit White with an in-between check, 1. ... Bxh4+, opening up an escape hatch for the Black King. The second player eventually won after 2. Ke2 Nxh5 3. Bg6+ Ke7 4. Bxh5 Kd7.

35. As White against Argentina's Sam Schweber in the 1970 Buenos Aires International, Bobby Fischer came up with a stunning in-between move after 1. Rxe4 Qxg3. Do you see it? The move is simply 2. Rxd4, and Black's Queen is all dressed up with nowhere to go. If 2. ... Qc7, then Fischer has 3. Bf4. In the game, Black tried 2. ... Qg4, with Fischer eventually winning after 3. Rxg4 Bxg4 4. Bxg6. Of course, after 1. Rxe4, Black cannot play 1. ... dxe4 because White picks up the Queen with 2. Bf4.

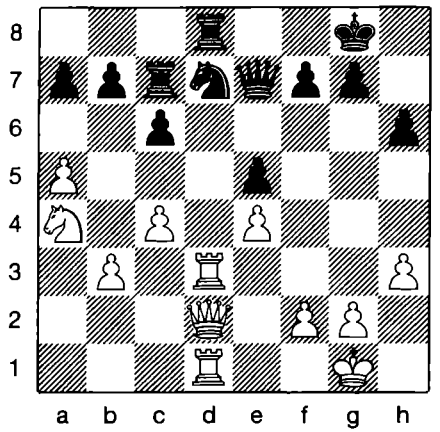


DIAGRAM 124

36. White to move. This battery just keeps going and going and going.

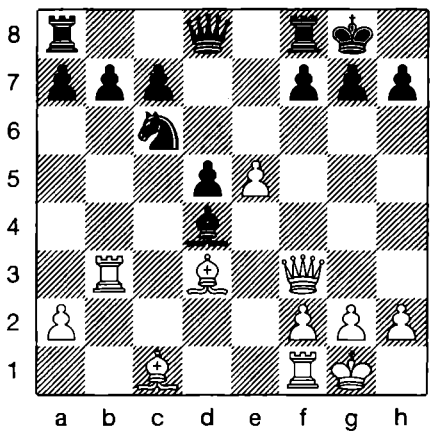


DIAGRAM 125

37. White to move. Assault with battery.

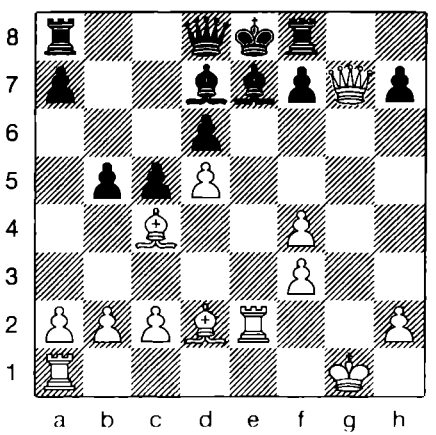


DIAGRAM 126

38. White to move. Create a battery ram.

ANSWERS

36. White's battery of Queen and two Rooks along the d-file is overwhelming. Still, the Knight on d7 is adequately defended, and the pinned Rook on d8 is in no danger so long as the Black Knight on d7 is defensible. White has two ways to upset the status quo. He can cash in immediately by winning a pawn with 1. Nb6 axb6 2. axb6 Rcc8 3. Rxd7 Rxd7 4. Qxd7 Qxd7 5. Rxd7. Or he can snag an Exchange by going slowly with 1. b4 and 2. Nc5. If 1. ... b6, then White still picks up an Exchange by 2. axb6 axb6 3. Nxb6. Batteries that involve pins frequently just keep going and going and going.

37. How much is a battery worth? Frequently, a player must decide whether it is worth sacrificing a pawn, piece or more to line up Queens and Rooks or Queens and Bishops. In this instance, an assault with battery is worth giving up a Bishop after 1. Bxh7+ Kxh7 2. Qh5+ Kg8 3. Rh3 (a classic Queen and Rook battery aimed along the h-file at the enemy King) 3. ... f6 (Black hopes to escape through f7) 4. e6!. Mate is unavoidable at either h7 or h8.

38. The Bishop at c4 is under attack, but White lines up a Rook battery along the e-file by 1. Rae1! and wins quickly after 1. ... bxc4 2. Ba5! (deflection) 2. ... Qxa5 3. Rxe7+ Kd8 4. Qxf8+. White's key decision was whether the e-file battery was worth two Bishops.

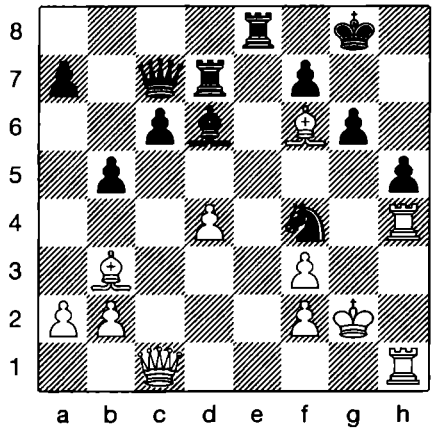


DIAGRAM 127

39. White to move. Mortgage everything for mate.

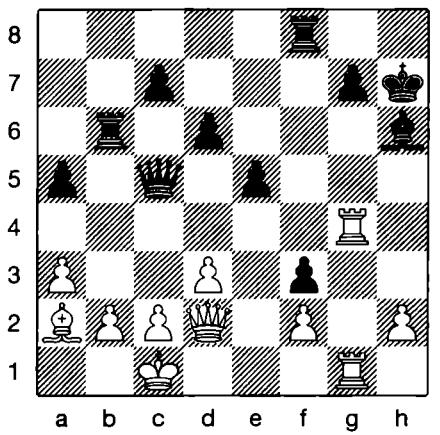


DIAGRAM 128

40. White to move. Find the tender spot.

ANSWERS

39. In Blackburne–Schwarz (Berlin, 1881), White forced mate by 1. Qxf4!! Bxf4 2. Rxh5 gxh5 3. Rxh5 with Rh8 mate in the offing. The idea was to eliminate the Knight guard on h5.

40. The tender point is g7, currently guarded by the Bishop on h6. Hence, 1. Qxh6+! gxh6 (if 1. ... Kxh6, then 2. Rh4 mate) 2. Rg7+ Kh8 3. Bg8!, threatening 4. Rh7 mate. The defense, 3. ... Rxg8, loses to 4. Rxg8+ Kh7 5. R1g7 mate.

6 Hard-Hitting Combinations

A COMBINATION IS A SERIES OF PLANNED MOVES, usually involving a sacrifice, that is directed toward a definite end. Your goal in playing a combination may be anything from winning the game to simply trying to confuse your opponent.

There are countless possible combinations in chess, and in your playing career you may never see exactly the same one twice. Thus, we see little point in providing a few dozen beautiful examples from the millions of combinations that have been played. In Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 we gave concrete examples of tactical themes that repeat themselves over and over again as devices within combinations (pins, double attacks, skewers, etc.), but the combinations themselves occur each in individual circumstances. They are seldom repeated.

The best way to spot pretty combinations of the kind that occur in this textbook and in practical games is to study tactical themes, which sharpens the eye for opportunities that can lead to a combination. In addition to the examples in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, you should take the time to revisit the accompanying chessercizes in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

Still, certain kinds of combinations occur very often—each in slightly different settings—and they are worth studying, for mastering these combinations will bring you many victories.

THE BxH7+ ATTACK ON THE KING

The most common combination, a sequence of moves that takes place again and again, is an attack against the Black King that begins with Bxh7+ or, if White is on the receiving end, with ... Bxh2+. Diagram 129 shows a Bxh7+ example in which Black has left his Kingside vulnerable through a series of poor moves.

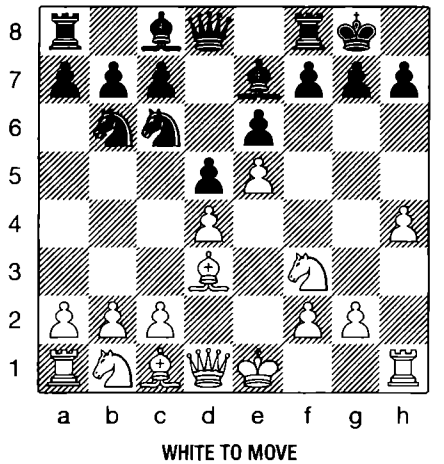


DIAGRAM 129

WHITE TO MOVE

1. **Bxh7+** **Kxh7**
2. **Ng5+**

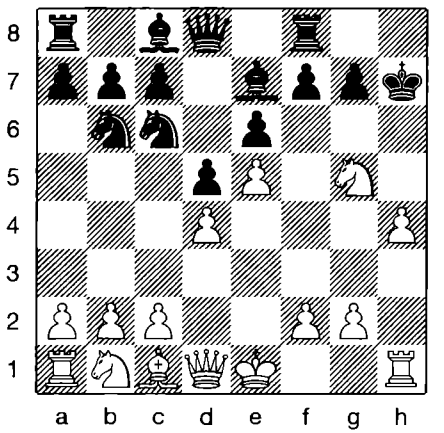


DIAGRAM 130

2. ... **Bxg5**

Of course, 2. ... Kh8 is suicide: 3. Qh5+ Kg8 4. Qh7, mate. Little better is 2. ... Kg8 3. Qh5, threatening Qh7 mate. After 3. ... Bxg5, White can force mate by 4. hxg5 (threatening 5. Qh8 mate) 4. ... f6 5. g6! (blocking the potential escape square of f7) 5. ... Re8 (or some other equally meaningless attempt at defense) 6. Qh8 mate.

3. hxg5+ Kg6

If 3. ... Kg8, then 4. Qh5 wins as given in the previous paragraph.

4. Qh5+ Kf5

5. g6+ Ke4

6. Qg4 mate

There are three important Bxh7+ themes in the above analysis:

1. Usually, when Black has a Bishop on e7 that can take the Knight on g5, the sacrifice of a Bishop on h7 will prove unsound. In this instance, the h-pawn anchors the Knight, and if Black trades Bishop for Knight, then White's King Rook has a deadly open line against the Black King. Keep in mind that a pawn on h4 for White can make possible a Bxh7+ combination that would otherwise be a poor idea.

2. Notice how White's g-pawn clamps down the lid tightly on Black's King. Ideas such as 5. g6! (see the note after 2. ... Bxg5) occur often in Bxh7+ combinations, and the point is usually to prevent the King from fleeing by closing up an escape square on f7. When calculating your combination, always look carefully for possible escapes by Black and then check to see if you have a g-pawn (or an e-pawn) that can advance to close off escape routes.

3. In most Bxh7+ combinations, Black has four options of where to place his King following Ng5+: ... Kg6, ... Kh6, ... Kg8, and ... Kh8. Of the four, ... Kg6 is often the only move that does not lose immediately because it prevents the White Queen from reaching h5. But ... Kg6 may also entangle the Black King in a mating net. In many instances, White is then able to play Qg4, threatening to uncover the g5-Knight on the Black King with a discovered check. If Black tries to defend with ... f7-f5 (attacking the White Queen), then White will often respond with Qg3, renewing the threat of a discovered check. In the example in Diagram 130, we see why ... Kh6 is seldom playable for Black: White can immediately play a discovered check thanks to the Bishop on c1 by moving the Knight, say, to e6, winning the Black Queen and quickly gaining a heavy material advantage thanks to the Bxh7+ sacrifice. As for ... Kg8, it is played quite often, whereas ... Kh8 appears to be always bad!

Be particularly alert to Bxh7+ sacrifices as White when you're playing the Colle System or playing against a French Defense. The pawn structures arising from these openings can provide the picture perfect opportunity for such an assault on the Black King.

Here is another Bxh7+ sacrifice that reinforces the possible importance of having a pawn (in this case, an e-pawn) to prevent the Black King from escaping to f7. You will notice that White has no follow up with a Knight check but can win nonetheless by using his Rook to reinforce the Queen for attacking purposes:

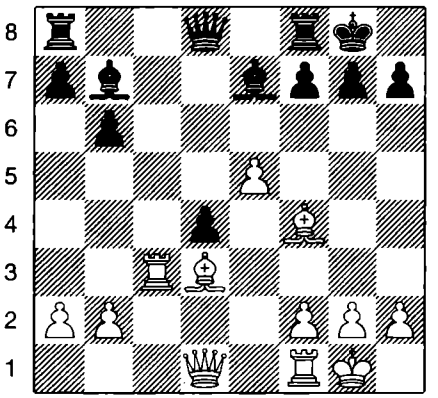


DIAGRAM 131

WHITE TO MOVE

White plays ...

1. **Bxh7+**

Black has two general options. He can refuse the material, thereby losing a pawn without compensation and opening up his King for further attack. Or, he can take the Bishop and hope that White will somehow badly misplay the attack. In short, taking the Bishop constitutes his single very slim reed of survival.

1. ... **Kxh7**
2. **Qh5+** **Kg8**
3. **Rh3**

White threatens 4. Qh8 mate or 4. Qh7 mate.

3. ... **f5**

Black tries to create air for his King on f7. Chessplayers frequently term this process "making luft."

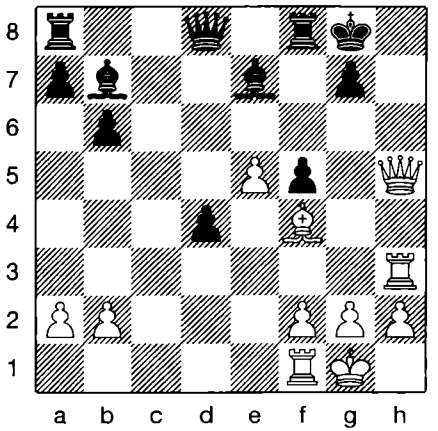


DIAGRAM 132

4. e6 Black resigns

As in the last example, Black can no longer move his King to f7 because of a pawn move (4. e6) covering that square. Mate will now follow by Qh8.

The point we want to make here is that although the positions differ between the two examples and although the combinations are somewhat different, most of the ideas—the building blocks of the combination—are alike. The little pawn move of g5-g6 or e5-e6 that prevents the enemy King from escaping occurs time and time again in Bxh7+ combinations.

When one of our new students missed a remarkably similar combination during a tournament game, we asked him why he failed to play the "obvious" Bxh7+ sacrifice. He answered that he saw the Bxh7+ idea immediately, but he could see no way of preventing the Black King from escaping to f7 after the second player moved his f-pawn.

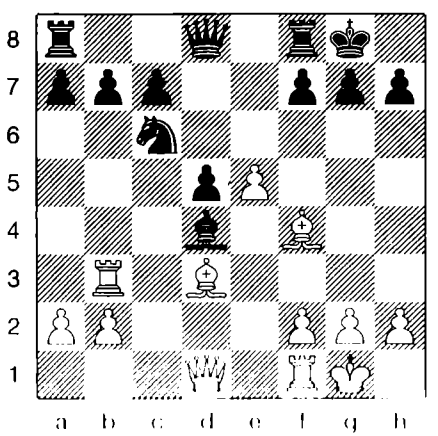


DIAGRAM 133

WHITE TO MOVE

Our student was simply unfamiliar with the basic patterns of Bxh7+ combinations. Otherwise, he would have known as if by instinct that g5-g6 or e5-e6 would snuff out such a bid for survival. After a bit of practice at pattern recognition, he would play Bxh7+ almost by reflex, "knowing" that it "must" be good—not in a metaphysical sense but in a practical everyday way. Yes, such a sacrifice as above could be weak 1 percent of the time, but we compete for prizes in chess tournaments based on what happens 99 percent of the time. Felix Mendelssohn, the great composer, once remarked that although chess is art, it is a disturbingly competitive and practical kind of art.

White wins here by 1. Bxh7+ Kxh7 2. Qh5+ Kg8 3. Rh3 f5 4. e6, followed quickly by mate.

Here is a Bxh7+ sacrifice in which the outcome is not so completely decisive so quickly. Indeed, Black decides to defend after 2. Ng5+ with 2. ... Kg6 and could make a fight out of it if White fails to play accurately.

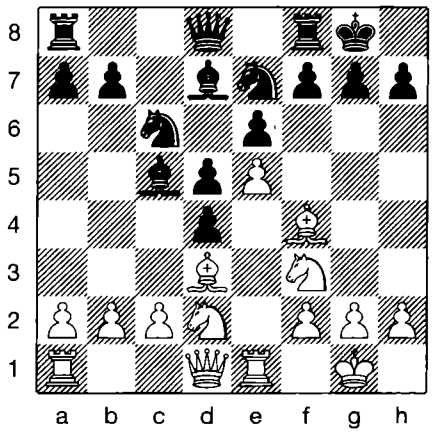


DIAGRAM 134

WHITE TO MOVE

1.	**Bxh7+**	**Kxh7**
2.	**Ng5+**	**Kg6**

Here is the defensive try that we mentioned in point No. 3 on page 103. In the current example, the position after 2. ... Kg8 yields an interesting and instructive point after 3. Qh5 (threatening 4. Qh7 mate) 3. ...Re8 4. Qh7+ (this move is absolutely convincing, while 4. Qxf7+ may allow Black an escape square in certain key lines; our point here is that you should always pause to think carefully before playing a move such as 4. Qxf7+, an idea that some people play automatically, thinking to win another pawn for the piece and to further denude Black's Kingside of its protective pawn cover). After 4. ... Kf8, White wins by 5. Qh8+ Ng8 6. Nh7+ Ke7 (notice that 6. ... Kf7 is impossible because White did not play the hasty 4. Qxf7+) 7. Bg5+ Nf6 (if 7. ... f6, then 8. Qxg7 mate) 8. Bxf6+ gxf6 9. Qxf6 mate.

And just as we suggested in Point No. 3 on page 103, after Black's 2. ... Kg6, White continues with...

3. Qg4

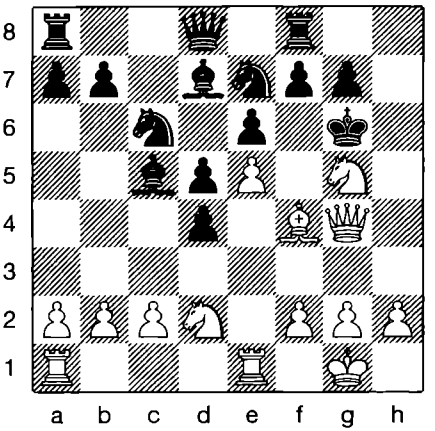


DIAGRAM 135

The idea here is 4. Nxe6+ Kh7 5. Qxg7 mate. In many other similar positions where the mate on g7 is unavailable and where the Black Queen Bishop cannot capture the White Queen, White would play Nxe6+ and Nxd8, winning the Queen.

3. ... f5

Black attacks White's Queen, thereby taking the sting out of a discovered check at this point.

4. exf6 *e.p.* Kxf6

5. Rxe6+ Bxe6

6. Qxe6 mate

CAN BLACK EVER DEFEND AGAINST BxH7+?

Yes, of course, Black can defend successfully against this sacrifice, though the Bxh7+ idea triumphs more often than it fails.

The key squares for both sides are h7 (where White often wishes to check with his Queen) and f6 or f8, where Black may place a Knight to defend against checks on h7. The idea of ... Nf8 is particularly insidious because the first player quite often overlooks this defensive resource. He boldly and, perhaps, a little blindly places his Knight on g5 and his Queen on h5 and then expects to win immediately by Qh7 mate or, at least, to play Qh7+ with the idea of chasing the Black King to its doom. At which point, Black calmly retreats his Knight from, say, d7 to f8, stopping White's attack cold.

The purpose of these defensive ideas is to protect the h7 square. A Black Knight can do it from f6 and f8. But there is another way of defending h7 that can be quite devilish because it is so unexpected. Before playing Bxh7+, always check for Black's Queen Bishop, which may be on c8 or b7 or, perhaps, on a6. Ask yourself whether it can reach f5, e4, or d3, whence it can guard the key h7 square.

Here, then, in Diagram 136 is quite literally a textbook example of how Black can defend against the Bxh7+ sacrifice. It appeared in Lev Alburt and Sam Palatnik's *Chess Tactics for the Tournament Player.*

GENLINGER – ISAAC KASHDAN
NEW YORK, 1930

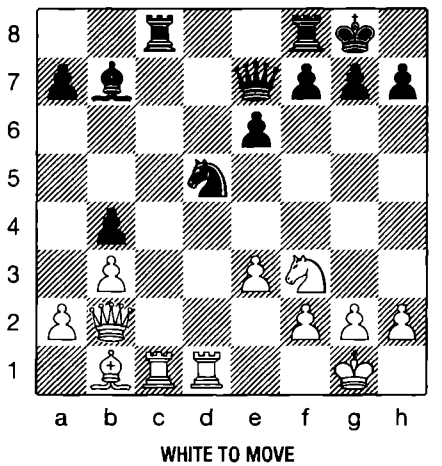


DIAGRAM 136

WHITE TO MOVE

1.	**Qe5**	**Nc3**

White is preparing for the Bxh7+ sacrifice by positioning his Queen for an immediate follow-up check on h5 against the Black King. Black, who was a leading world title candidate at the time this game was played, notices the possibility. But he has faith that his Bishop on b7 will be able to guard h7 and help beat back the attack.

2.	**Rxc3**	

The immediate sacrifice of 2. Bxh7+ can be repulsed by 2. ... Kxh7 3. Qh5+ Kg8 4. Ng5 Be4 5. Rxc3 Bg6.

2.	**...**	**bxc3**
3.	**Bxh7+**	**Kxh7**
4.	**Qh5+**	**Kg8**
5.	**Ng5**	**Be4!**

Just as we noted above, Black uses his Queen Bishop to guard h7 and to beat back the attack.

6. Nxe4

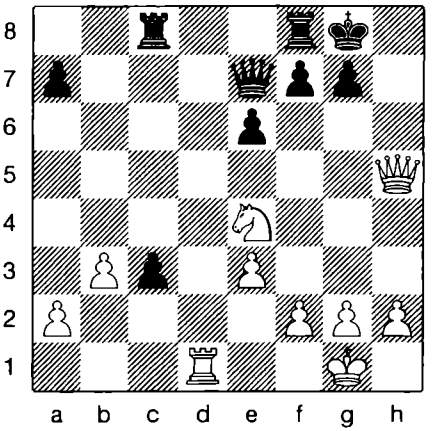


DIAGRAM 137

6. ... c2

The Black counterattack now prevails.

7. Rc1 Rfd8

Black creates a square on f8 for his King, a necessity in view of 7. ... Qa3 8. Nf6+ gxf6 9. Qg4+ when White can draw by perpetual check on the King.

8. h3 f5

9. Ng5 Qxg5!

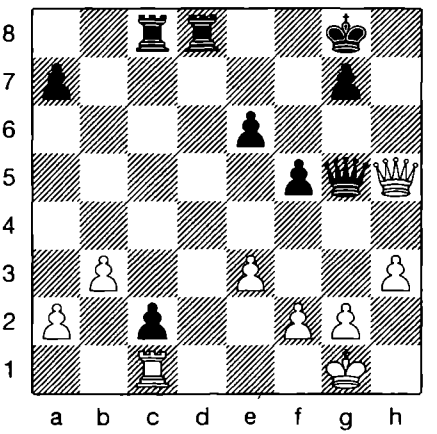


DIAGRAM 138

10. Qxg5 Rd1+

11. Kh2 Rxc1

White resigns

White has a material deficit and no attack left. Black's c-pawn will soon become a Queen.

KEY POINTS FOR WHITE TO REMEMBER IN BxH7+ COMBINATIONS

1. Before playing Bxh7+, make sure that Black cannot place a Knight on f6 or f8, defending the key h7 square. Further, check to see if Black's Queen Bishop can move from, say, c8 to f5 or, in the case of the Queen, from d8 to d3, defending the h7 square. In Genlinger–Kashdan, for example, the Bishop went from b7 to e4 to guard h7.

2. When calculating to see if the Black King will perish, do not forget to look for the pawn advances g5-g6 or e5-e6, which frequently prevent the enemy King from escaping to f7.

3. You may not be able to see the combination to its very end but can see that there is at least a forced draw by perpetual check on f7 and h5. In that case, play the combination to the point where you have the draw in hand. You can then take a second look at the position, when you should be able to see more deeply into the likely final outcome.

4. After placing a Knight on g5 and Queen on h5, do not automatically grab the f7 pawn in order to pick up more material and to further denude the Black Kingside. Check first to see if the capture is a good one. Too many players get carried away by making "automatic" moves very quickly, and grabbing the f7 pawn with check certainly seems to be just such an "automatic" move. Force yourself to sit on your hands and think out the position.

5. Although the King Knight usually plays a crucial role in Bxh7+ combinations by going to g5, the sacrifice can also be made if a Rook can be quickly moved along the third rank (see Diagram 131) to h3 to help the White Queen in its attack on h7 and h8. But if White does not have a Rook on the third rank, the combination may still be barely possible if the Rook can be played immediately to the third rank (say, from d1 to d3) and then over to h3.

IMPORTANT IDEAS FOR BLACK WHEN DEFENDING AGAINST BxH7+

1. Do not rush to open the h-file for White's King Rook by capturing a White piece on g5 that is guarded by a pawn on h4. Permitting White to add his Rook to the attack with the Queen will usually be quickly fatal.

2. Look for ways to bring a Knight to f6 or f8 as a defender or the Queen Bishop to f5 or e4.

3. Remember that the defense of ... f7-f6 or ... f7-f5 may fail against g5-g6 or e5-e6, cutting off the King's escape to f7.

4. After the King captures the Bishop on h7 and is checked by a Knight on g5, it usually has four possible squares (g8, h8, g6, and h6) to escape check. Only g8, g6 and h6 deserve consideration; moving to h8, which allows the White Queen to come to h5 with a check, is simply suicidal.

5. If you are playing the Black side of the French or the Colle System, keep your eyes open for the Bxh7+ possibility, which is quite common in these openings.

SACRIFICES ON F7

Just as White frequently sacrifices on h7 to pry open the castled position of the Black King, so he also invests Bishops and Knights on f7 for the similar purpose of attacking the uncastled enemy King. A Knight sacrifice on f7 occurs in one of the oldest known opening variations, the Fegatello Attack (Italian for "Fried Liver" Attack), which is part of the Two Knights Defense:

1.	e4	e5
2.	Nf3	Nc6
3.	Bc4	Nf6
4.	Ng5	d5
5.	exd5	Nxd5

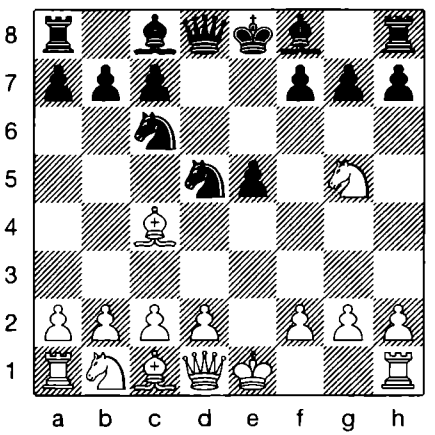


DIAGRAM 139

6. Nxf7!?

We use a "!?" to indicate that the sacrifice is interesting, speculative and currently regarded as unclear by many authorities. No one knows its status for sure because there is still no outright refutation of White's piece offer. Furthermore, whatever we claim about the sacrifice in the quiet and safety of our dens, those who must play Black and defend against White's attack often find the task difficult. Overall, White wins a large majority of games from the position after 6. Nxf7!?.

We recommend the Fegatello Attack highly. You will get plenty of practice playing a brave attack that involves many combinations. Still better, you will win most of the games because your attacking moves, which involve simply bringing your pieces into play, are fairly obvious, while Black has a double burden. First, he must often find a single available move among many possibilities that will keep his extra material (if White

wins back the piece, then he has a huge advantage because of Black's insecure King); second, he faces numerous White threats and must defend against them.

True, some chess doctors who write books about the royal game say that in theory Black should be able to defend against all of the threats and keep his extra material. But a single slip means disaster. As in real life, chess contains a distinction between theory and practice.

6. ... Kxf7

7. Qf3+ Ke6

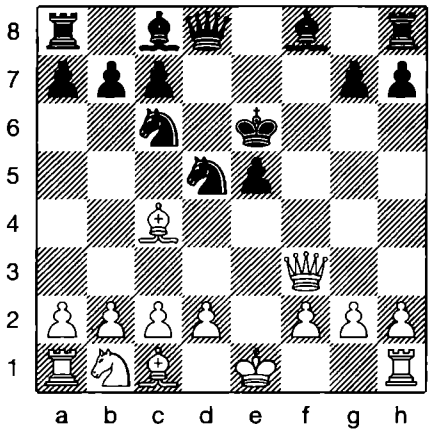


DIAGRAM 140

After moves other than 7. ... Ke6, White immediately wins back his piece by taking the Knight on d5. Notice how Black is twisted like a pretzel defending his pinned Knight.

The above position has been played tens of thousands of times and is a good starting point for young players wishing to test themselves in tactics. It provides great practice.

A still more common sacrificial idea on f7 is Bxf7+ for White or ... Bxf2+ for Black. When the sacrifice is sound and occurs within the first 10 moves or so, it is usually the result of a very bad move by the opponent. There are plenty of common opening traps in which the move occurs.

Take, for example, this position in the Danish Gambit:

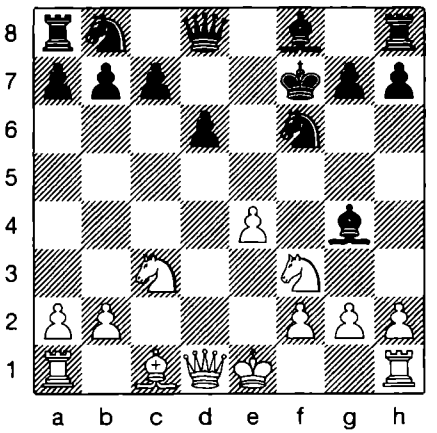
1. e4 e5

2. d4 exd4

3. c3 dxc3

White's third move is the beginning of the Danish Gambit. The main line is 3. ... dxc3 4. Bc4 cxb2 5. Bxb2, when White has a lot of development and plenty of open lines as payment for his two pawns. Most players as Black prefer to avoid this gambit.

4.	**Nxc3**	**Nf6**
5.	**Bc4**	**d6**
6.	**Nf3**	**Bg4?**
7.	**Bxf7+**	**Kxf7**



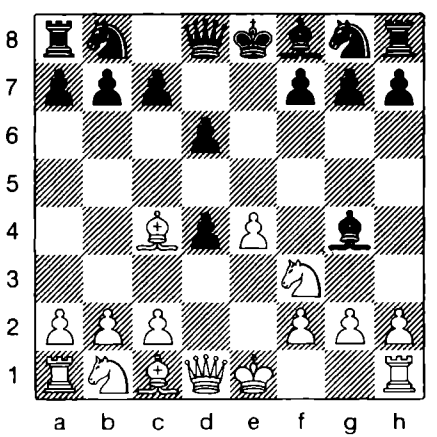
WHITE TO MOVE

DIAGRAM 141

8. Ne5+!

After Black moves his King out of check, White plays 9. Nxg4, regaining his sacrificed Bishop. Black has lost the ability to castle. Notice that 8. ... dxe5 is not possible because of 9. Qxd8, winning the Queen. When Black falls for this trap, he most likely overlooks that the d-pawn is pinned on his Queen.

Too often, White plays Bxf7+ and then follows up with a major blunder. Diagram 142 is a variation of the preceding position.



WHITE TO MOVE

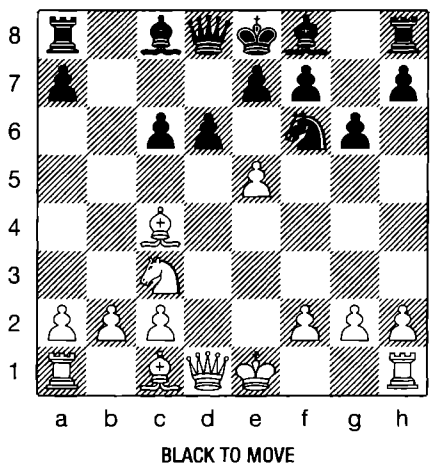
DIAGRAM 142

White now snags a pawn by 1. Bxf7+?? Kxf7. His idea is to play 2. Ng5+ with the intention of taking the Bishop on g4 with his Queen.

Try to remember the above position and avoid the trap of playing Bxf7+. After 2. Ng5+, Black can reply with the pseudo-sacrifice of 2. ... Qxg5!. Don't forget that after 1. ... Kxf7, Black is up a piece, and he can now "sacrifice" his Queen for the g5-Knight if he can also keep the White Queen under attack. In the very common combinative idea of taking on f7, always keep in mind the possibility of a pseudo-sacrifice by the Queen against a Knight checking on g5. Further, check to see if the alternative check on e5 is possible for White. Here, however, the Ne5 check would be bad.

Another kind of Bxf7+ sacrifice occurs in order to decoy the Black King from the guard of his Queen. The most common example occurs in the oft-played Sicilian Defense after:

1.	**e4**	**c5**
2.	**Nf3**	**d6**
3.	**d4**	**cxd4**
4.	**Nxd4**	**Nf6**
5.	**Nc3**	**g6**
6.	**Bc4**	**Nc6?!**
7.	**Nxc6**	**bxc6**
8.	**e5**	



BLACK TO MOVE

DIAGRAM 143

White can break open the center because after 8. ... dxe5??, he wins the Queen by 9. Bxf7+ Kxf7 10. Qxd8. When your Queen attacks or can attack an opponent's Queen on d8, always look to see if Bxf7+ is an immediate winner or can confer an advantage.

PAWN COMBINATIONS

You have learned by now that if a pawn reaches the eighth rank, you can and, indeed, must promote it to a Queen, Rook, Bishop or Knight. It cannot remain a pawn, and you cannot make a second King.

Most promotions are to a Queen, since the lady is the most powerful piece on the board. But there are instances, which occur often enough for mention here, when it is better to underpromote to a lesser piece such as a Knight or Bishop. In Diagram 144, White can promote to a Queen by 1. c8=Q, but Black draws very easily after 1. ... Qh7+ 2. Kg4 Qxh1, when each side has King and Queen. A dead draw.

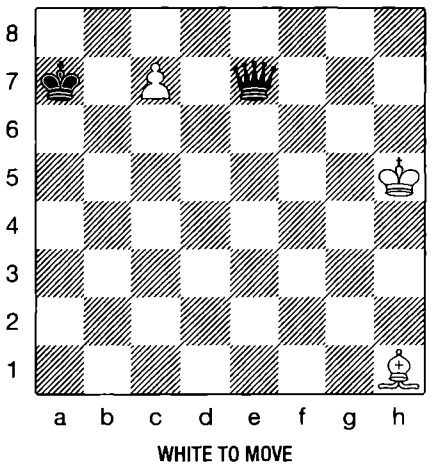


DIAGRAM 144

WHITE TO MOVE

However, take a second look at the position, and instead of promoting to a powerful Queen, make a Knight instead by 1. c8=N+!. The Black King must move, and White snags the Queen. White then has King, Bishop and Knight versus King—a position in which he can eventually force checkmate, albeit only after a very difficult procedure. This process involves driving the lone King to a corner with the same square color as that on which the bisop stands. Because such an endgame is very rare, we do not cover it in this volume.

In the next position, White has a way of breaking through what appears to be an equal standoff between the three pawns of each side. As White, many players who are unaware of the combinative possibility here

would bring their King into the center while Black also does the same, leaving a drawn position.

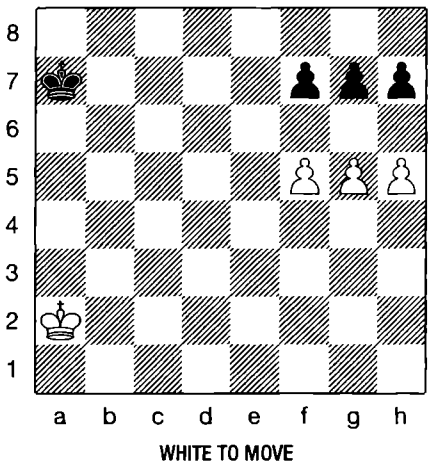


DIAGRAM 145

WHITE TO MOVE

Instead, White can play 1. g6, threatening the obvious 2. gxf7 or 2. gxh7, followed by promoting the pawn to a Queen, winning easily. Black must capture with either the f- or h-pawn, though the outcome is a loss in either case. After 1. ... fxg6, White plays 2. h6 gxh6 (forced) 3. f6, when White makes a Queen in two moves. After 1. ... hxg6, White plays 2. f6 gxf6 3. h6, and he will make a Queen in two more moves.

Of course, if Black is on move in the previous diagram, he can save himself with 1. ... g6! leading to a draw. But he would lose after 1. ... h6 2. f6, 1. ... f6 2. h6, or 1... Kb6 2. g6.

ROOK COMBINATIONS

In Book 1 of this series we presented several examples of how Rooks can combine to deliver checkmate against enemy Kings trapped on their back ranks. But the most common combinative role for Rooks is to grab the

open d- and e-files during the early going and to make use of these open files to harass the enemy King, especially by preventing castling.

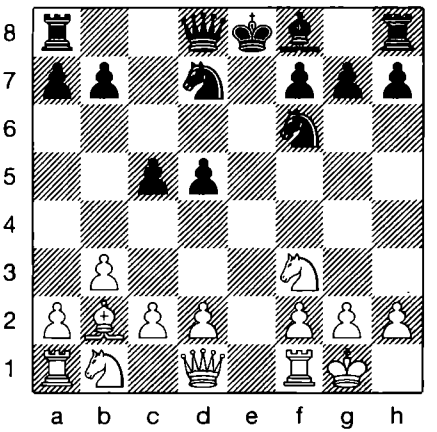


DIAGRAM 146

WHITE TO MOVE

In the above position, White plays 1. Re1+, forcing 1. ...Be7, since Black drops a piece after 1. ... Ne4 2. d3. Now, White plays 2. Qe2, strengthening the pin against the Bishop on e7. Black cannot castle without losing the Bishop, and White possesses a big advantage because he can continue to develop while the Black King remains trapped in the center.

A second, less common combinative idea involving Rooks, is the move of castling itself. How does White win in Diagram 147?

FEUER – ALBERIC O'KELLY
LIEGE, 1930

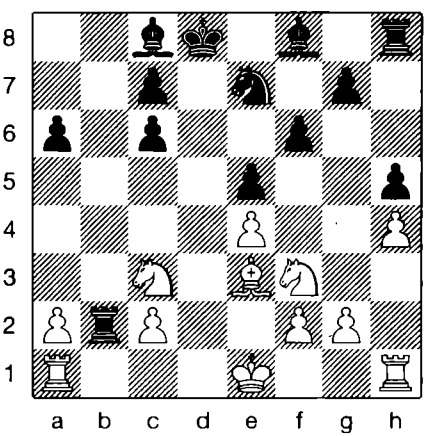


DIAGRAM 147

WHITE TO MOVE

The winning idea is 1. 0-0-0!!, when White's King can suddenly capture

the Rook on b2 thanks to the Rook check on the opposing monarch. Players have also used the castling move even to deliver checkmate.

THE FINE ART OF STALEMATE

Stalemate occurs when the opponent has no legal move, and the game is then considered a draw. Stalemates usually happen when the weaker side has only a King or one or two other pieces left. Diagram 148 shows a simple example that we present because it occurred in a tournament game (albeit a speed game) involving a world champion!

GARRY KASPAROV – KIRIL GEORGIEV
ST. JOHN, 1988

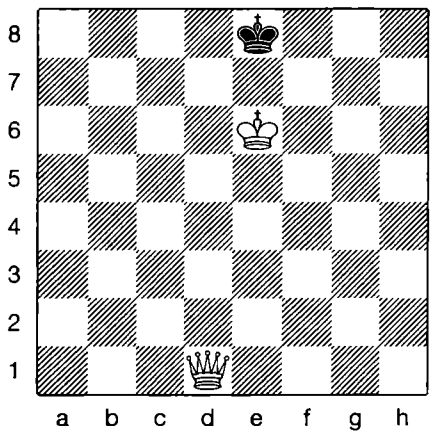


DIAGRAM 148

WHITE TO MOVE

White, the world champion, made the blunder of a lifetime by forgetting basic stalemate patterns. White can force mate in two by 1. Qd7+ Kf8 2. Qf7 mate. Instead, he played the incredible 1. Qd6 stalemate. The Black King has no moves!

7 Sturdy King Pawn Openings

FOR MANY NOVICES, THE OPENING MOVES constitute something of a mystery. Why, for example, after 1. e4 c5 (the Sicilian Defense) does White play 2. Nf3 rather than, say, 2. Bc4? We think of the hundreds of books on Sicilian opening variations and then tend to decide that 2. Bc4 has some specific flaw. Perhaps the threat of ... e7-e6 and ... d7-d5, forcing White to move his Bishop and thereby to lose a tempo, is the reason we rarely see 2.Bc4 played.

In truth, however, opening moves are based on definite ideas, which are usually there even if not often obvious. In the case of 2. Bc4 in the Sicilian, there is no specific flaw, no killer refutation; this early Bishop move simply doesn't conform to the principles of sound opening play—principles that you will learn to appreciate in this chapter.

The two most common moves for starting a game are 1. e4 (which we recommend for beginning and intermediate players) and 1. d4. Although many top players have strong ideas about which of these moves is better for them personally, relatively few have fixed opinions as to which of the moves is stronger intrinsically.

The prevailing view is that 1. e4 and 1. d4 are for all practical purposes of equal strength. In the whole of chess history there is no instance where the loss of a game has been objectively traced back to someone having played 1. e4 e5 or 1. d4 d5—or, for that matter, to several other possible first moves by White and Black.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A MOVE MAKES

Although the purpose behind 1. e4 and 1. d4 is about the same (to grab the center with, if possible, an immediate 2. d4 or 2. e4), the play that later develops from these two moves is quite dissimilar.

With 1. e4, White opens up the Queen on the d1-h5 diagonal and liberates the King Bishop to go to c4, where it can attack f7 and, potentially, the Black King. Games that develop from 1. e4 may proceed very quickly to a conclusion. If Black, for example, plays inaccurately, he may lose in

only a few moves. On the other hand, sometimes you can make several poor moves in Queen pawn openings and still fight for a long time. (Of course, against a strong opponent, you will lose just as certainly.)

A mistaken attitude among many beginning and intermediate players is that holding on for a large number of moves is in itself a sign of progress. Untrue. A player could lose in 25 moves as Black against 1. e4 and put up a stronger fight than someone who loses prosaically and simply in 60 moves as Black against 1. d4.

Bobby Fischer is certainly the greatest player among those who are very strong advocates of 1. e4. "Best by test," he wrote in his *My 60 Memorable Games.* In his career, Fischer used 1. e4 to produce straightforward attacking and positional chess that brought him numerous speedy victories against even world championship level opponents.

The downside to 1. e4 is that it frequently brings a game to a crisis point too early from White's viewpoint. Black finds the single defense that permits a tradeoff of pieces, and a draw ensues. The advantage of 1. d4 is that it puts off decisive action until more pieces enter the position actively, thereby making accurate defense more intricate and difficult.

GETTING IN ... D7-D5

If White can find a way to permanently consolidate his initial control of the center and then build upon his development, he almost always reaches a much better position. Controlling the center and maintaining the initiative conferred by the first move is often enough to win in the long run.

For his part, Black has several ways to undermine White's control of central squares, and the most obvious is to dispute the e-pawn's force field directed at d5. After all, 1. e4:

- Puts a pawn in the center to strike at d5
- Opens the King Bishop for development at c4 or b5 (less efficacious is either Bd3 or Be2)
- Gives the d1-h5 diagonal to the White Queen
- Paves the way for speedy development of all White's Kingside pieces and early castling, permitting the first player at times to bring three or four pieces into play within the first five or six moves

Among Black's many strategies to nullify these advantages, the most obvious is to answer 1. e4 with 1. ... e5 so as to contest the center immediately. A second strategy that is not so obvious is to fight for d5 with a well-timed pawn advance by ... d7-d5.

The idea of ... d7-d5 is based on a need to avoid certain kinds of pawn structures that can later arise from 1. e4 e5 openings. For example, in the Philidor's Defense after 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 exd4 4. Nxd4, this position occurs:

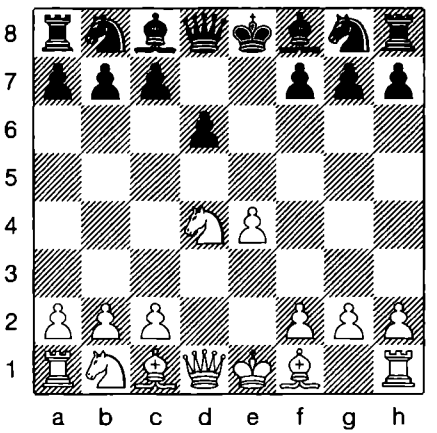


DIAGRAM 149

Eliminate all of the pieces from this position, and you have the following pawn skeletons for both sides:

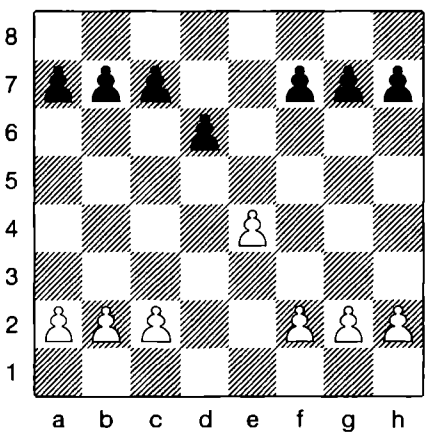


DIAGRAM 150

FAVORABLE PAWN FORMATION FOR WHITE

The above array of pawns, when fleshed out with pieces, will usually favor White because he still controls d5 and f5 and can quickly gain a major space advantage with f2-f4 or, in some instances, g2-g4. All other things being equal, Black wishes to avoid the above array of forces by earlier advancing his d-pawn to d5 and trading off White's e-pawn.

Numerous opening schemes for Black attempt to enforce the advance of the d pawn—most notably, the Center Counter Defense by 1. e4 d5, an idea that has a drawback. If Black actually could contest the d5 square as early as move 1, then White could not be said to have much of an advan

tage because of the first move. But 1. ... d5 is somewhat premature, trying to grab too much too soon without paying the dues of first developing one's forces. After 2. exd5 Qxd5 3. Nc3 Qa5 4. d4, this position is reached:

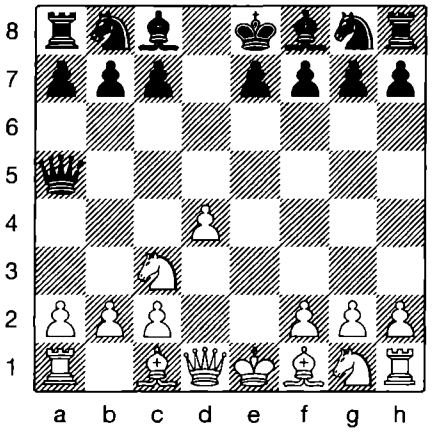


DIAGRAM 151

POSITION AFTER 4. D4

White has a better development and, if he plays accurately, should get a slightly better game after the opening. Still, Black's position is solid and easy to handle. In addition, this opening requires very little concrete knowledge by Black. Its ideas are easily understood. You should be ready to play this double-edged debut after just a few hours of study.

There are other ways, after some preparation, to play ... d5—for example, the Caro-Kann Defense, which begins 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5:

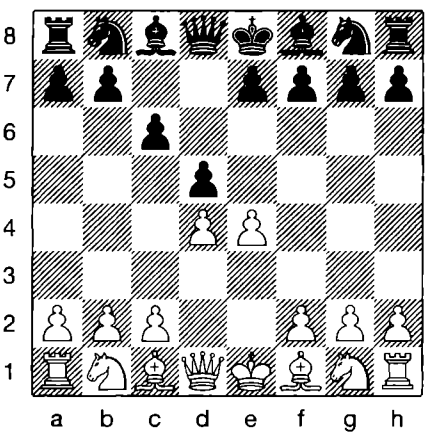


DIAGRAM 152

And there's also the French Defense, which begins 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5:

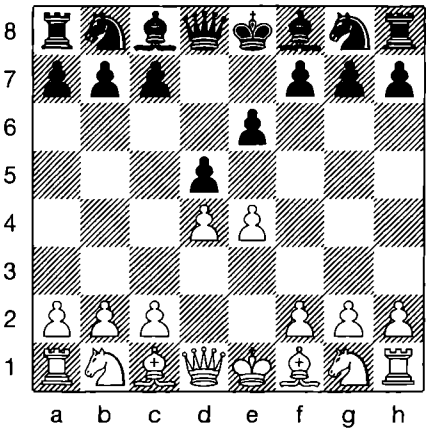


DIAGRAM 153

Please notice that in the Caro-Kann and the French, Black prepares for ... d7-d5 by first playing supportive pawn moves to, respectively, c6 and e6, so that if White chooses to exchange pawns after, say, 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5, then Black can recapture with a pawn by 3. ... cxd5, maintaining a pawn presence in the center.

DOUBLE E-PAWN OPENINGS

1. e4 e5

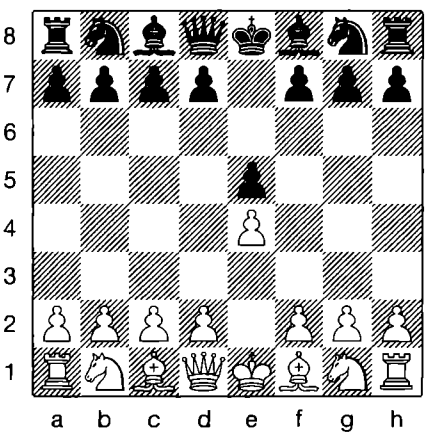


DIAGRAM 154

The double e-pawn openings arise after 1. e4 e5, when White has several options. He can immediately attack Black's e-pawn with either 2. d4 (the Center Game) or 2. f4 (the King's Gambit), or he can do the same thing while simultaneously developing a piece by 2. Nf3.

The option of developing a piece by 2. Nf3, which threatens 3. Nxe5, is probably White's strongest continuation and is the line most often seen in

games involving masters. The balance of this chapter examines some of the most popular and effective openings of the 1. e4 e5 type.

THE RUY LOPEZ

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5

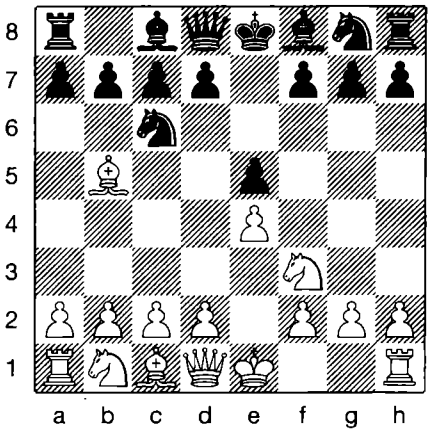


DIAGRAM 155

The Ruy Lopez opening is sometimes called the opening of world champions because for a long time it was held that no player could become the titleholder without first mastering this debut, which is uniquely rich in all of the major strategical ideas in chess. Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch, the great German chess teacher, once said that a player who cannot win great Ruys is not a great player.

An exaggeration? Yes, but it is hyperbole with a point. There is a tremendous amount of positional tension after only three moves. The game has developed with perfect logic:

- White stakes a position in the center with 1. e4.
- Black contests control with 1. ... e5.
- White attacks e5 with 2. Nf3.
- Black defends with 2. ... Nc6.
- White renews the attack with 3. Bb5, putting pressure on the e5 pawn by threatening a timely Bxc6, eliminating the defender of the e5 pawn.

The moves of both White and Black in the Ruy represent an alternation of attack and defense, attack and defense. For White to work up deadly threats after Black has played so logically by staking out the center and then defending that stake requires implementing several deep strategical concepts. But for Black to defend, when White uses the most direct of all methods for asserting his advantage of the first move (1. e4 and then the

THE STRONG-POINT DEFENSE

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 d6

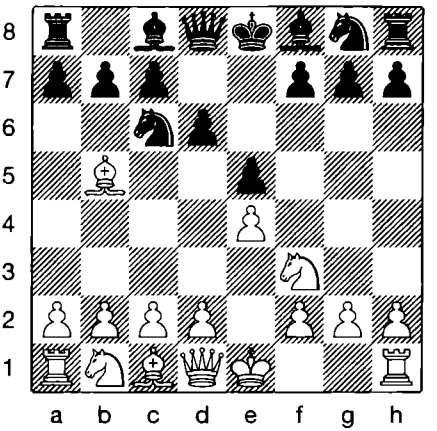


DIAGRAM 156

After White increases the pressure against the e-pawn by playing 3. Bb5, the most natural reply for Black is to protect the e-pawn with 3. ... d6—the Steinitz Defense, which is an attempt to build a strong point on e5. However, White's position is somewhat better after 4. d4 Bd7 5. Nc3 Nf6 6. 0-0 Be7 7. Re1 exd4 8. Nxd4. Notice that the pawn skeletons after 8. Nxd4 are identical to those in Diagram 150.

THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6

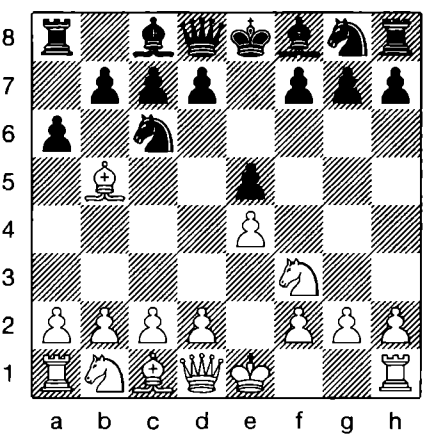


DIAGRAM 157

Because the apparently logical defense by 3. ... d6 leads to cramped positions, Black must seek other ways to neutralize White's attack on e5. The most compelling is 3 ... a6, hitting the Bishop. Play usually continues:

4. Ba4

White would rather not trade Bishop for Knight in most instances, though Bobby Fischer achieved excellent results with 4. Bxc6 during the 1960s.

4. ... Nf6

5. 0-0

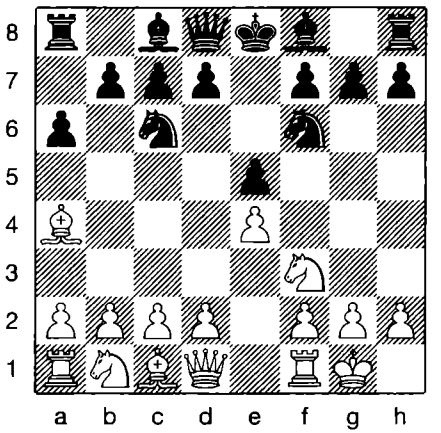


DIAGRAM 158

At this juncture, Black can choose from a variety of plans. The most popular line of the Ruy Lopez, which has been played countless times in thousands of tournaments, continues with:

5. ... Be7

6. Re1 b5

7. Bb3 d6

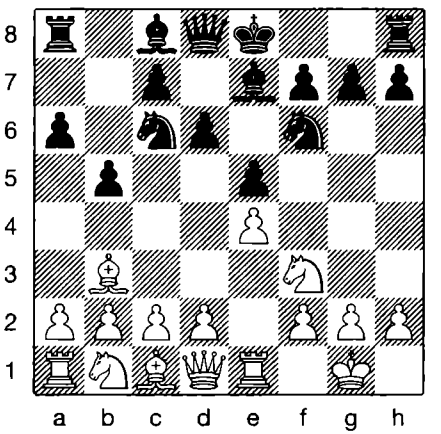


DIAGRAM 159

Setting up the strong point defense of the pawn on e5.

8. c3

Otherwise White loses his strong King Bishop for a Knight after 8. ... Na5. The pawn move to c3 also provides support for White to play d2-d4.

8.	**...**	**Na5**
9.	**Bc2**	**c5**
10.	**h3**	**Qc7**

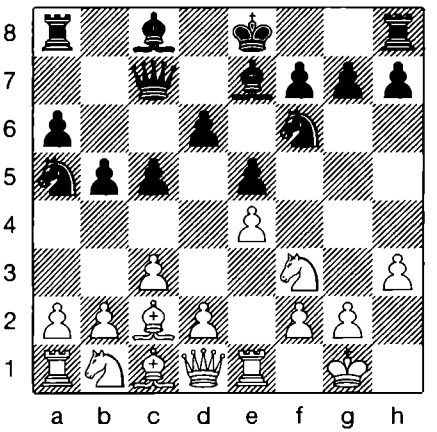


DIAGRAM 160

White will expand in the center, hoping to unleash the latent power of his Bishops against the Black King; Black has gained space for his pieces by advancing his Queenside pawns and shoring up his e-pawn.

From this point onward, many games have featured a battle of maneuver in which Black strives to open a file on the Queenside while White looks for ways to open the center and explode his pieces against the Black King. Both players attempt to exploit advantages by opening lines in those sectors of the board where they hold an advantage in force.

Here is a representative line:

11.	**d4**	**0-0**
12.	**Nbd2**	

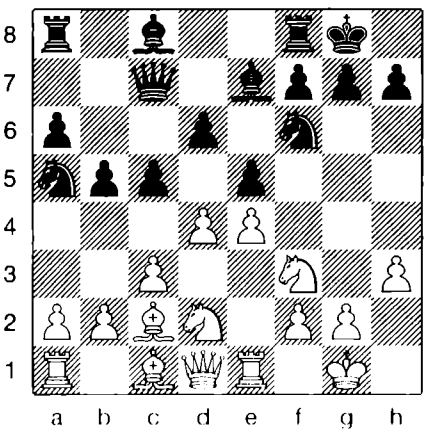


DIAGRAM 161

12.	**...**	**Nc6**

13.	**d5**	**Nd8**
14.	**a4**	**Rb8**

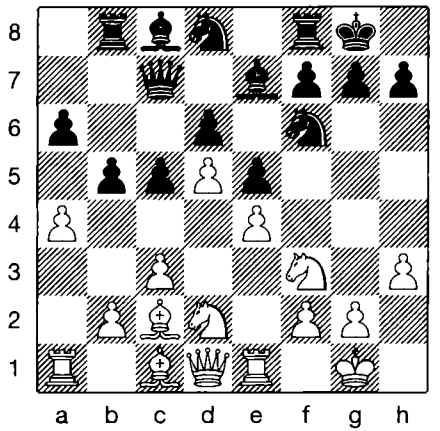


DIAGRAM 162

Okay, let's take stock of the situation. Notice how Black played 14. ... Rb8 (otherwise, White can win a pawn with 15. axb5 because of 15. ... axb5 16. Rxa8) rather than 14. ... b4. Here is a rule of positional thumb for Black in the Ruy: After White plays a2-a4, Black should usually avoid playing ... b5-b4. That's because White can establish a strong Knight at c4 and block off Black's Queenside counterplay. White will then have a relatively free hand to proceed against the Black Kingside.

Here is a sample of how play may now develop on the Kingside:

15.	**c4**	**b4**
16.	**Nf1**	**Ne8**
17.	**g4**	**g6**
18.	**Ng3**	**Ng7**

19. Kh2 f6
20. Rg1

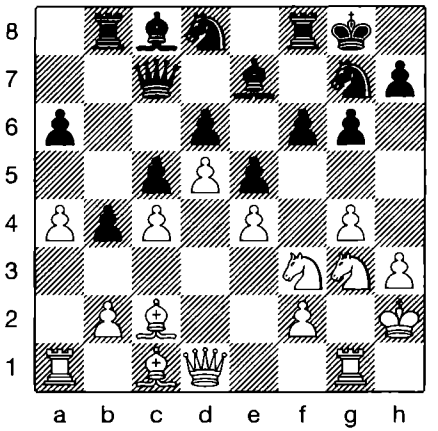


DIAGRAM 163

Black has had time to mount a defensive formation and has good hopes to interlock pawns on the Kingside so as to gum up White's attacking maneuvers.

In your games you will seldom play exactly the moves as given in this chapter or in any other book on the openings. Your opponent may vary with worse ideas or, quite often, with ideas that are as good or almost as good as those given here. Therefore, it is more important to understand the ideas behind opening moves than to memorize concrete variations.

For White, the objective in the Ruy line we discussed is to keep the center open for a while (at least until Black has played 12. ... Nc6) and clamp down on the Queenside, preferably by dropping a Knight onto the c4 square if given an opportunity. A second key idea for White is to transfer the Queen Knight to f1 by way of d2 and then to e3 or g3, with the further intention of placing it on f5, where it can help in an attack against a Black King castled on its own wing.

For Black, the objective is to open files on the Queenside, and if White begins to fritter away moves, then Black should think about playing ... c5-c4, ... Nb7, ... Nc5, ... a6-a5 and ... b5-b4. Indeed, if Black can get in these moves without White directly proceeding to a Kingside attack, then the second player may already have a better position.

Another idea for Black at move 12 (see Diagram 161) is to open the c-file by trying 12. ... cxd4 rather than 12. ... Nc6. There could follow 13. cxd4 Nc6 14. d5 Nb4 15. Bb1 a5 16. a3.

A COUNTERATTACKING DEFENSE: MARSHALL GAMBIT

Defenses to the Ruy Lopez that involve shoring up the e5-pawn are solid and often permit Black to hold a draw. The problem is that Black can seldom play to win in these positions, at least at the master level.

At the beginner and intermediate level, the strong-point defenses of e5 are perfectly adequate for eventually trying to win. The game will last a long time, and both sides will have to solve numerous niggling positional and tactical riddles. If you feel that you are as good or better than your opponent, then the strong-point defensive positions should be your meat.

Still, attempting to shore up the e5-pawn requires a lot of very patient maneuvering without much accompanying attacking action. For White, the position affords winning opportunities with a Kingside attack that is often more difficult to defend against than to conduct, though later analysis typically shows that with best play Black could have drawn a given position.

Defenses that attempt to shore up the e5-pawn typically provide provide White with what is meant in chess by the phrase "good practical chances." Black must often find a single viable move, while White can choose among two or three more or less adequate attacking moves at each turn. In a purely statistical sense, Black has more chances to go wrong.

For those wishing to counterattack rather than to defend laboriously, we recommend the Marshall Gambit, invented by Frank J. Marshall, a brilliant attacking player who was U.S. chess champion from 1909 to 1936. The bad news about this gambit is that Black not only fails to build a defense for the e5-pawn, he actually surrenders it. The good news is that Black has pulled off numerous brilliant victories with this pawn sacrifice.

The Marshall Gambit develops as follows:

1.	**e4**	**e5**
2.	**Nf3**	**Nc6**
3.	**Bb5**	**a6**
4.	**Ba4**	**Nf6**
5.	**0-0**	**Be7**
6.	**Re1**	**b5**
7.	**Bb3**	**0-0**

Instead of defending e5 with 7. ... d6.

MARSHALL GAMBIT

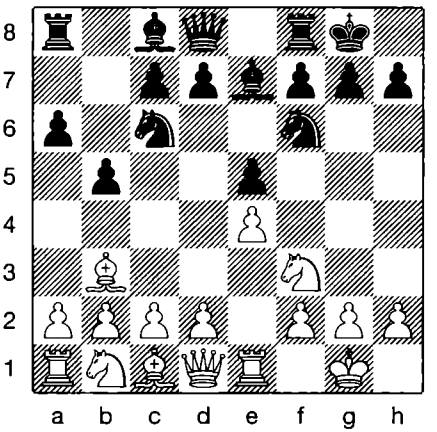


DIAGRAM 164

The main line of this variation now runs:

8.	**c3**	**d5**
9.	**exd5**	**Nxd5**
10.	**Nxe5**	**Nxe5**
11.	**Rxe5**	**c6**
12.	**d4**	

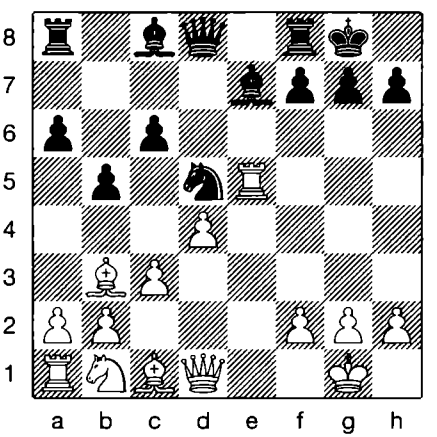


DIAGRAM 165

Black often plays a Bishop to d6 and his Queen to h4. When all works out, he will also get a Knight to g4 with a strong attack in most cases.

Nowadays, the Marshall Gambit, which had an inauspicious debut in 1918 when Marshall unsuccessfully ventured it against the great Jose Raul Capablanca, is considered one of Black's strongest practical chances

against the Ruy Lopez. So strong, in fact, that some players as White prefer to sidestep the gambit by playing 8. a4 (instead of 8. c3) 8. ... b4 9. d4 d6, with a complex game.

AN ATTACKING OPENING: THE VIENNA GAME

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3

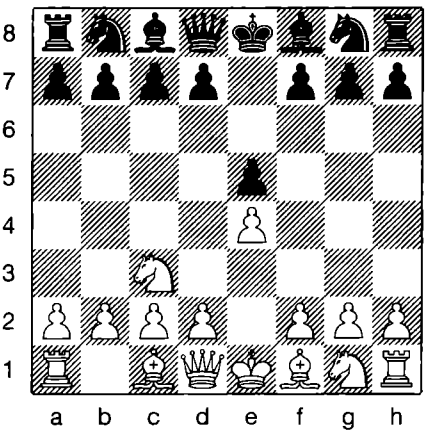


DIAGRAM 166

The King's Gambit proceeds with 1. e4 e5 2. f4. The Vienna was originally an attempt to effect a delayed King's Gambit with 1.e4 e5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. f4, but this line is no longer a favorite in modern tournament play. Still, the Vienna is filled with aggressive ideas that can be examined in a few hours of rigorous study. Here is how a non-master won a strikingly short and powerful attacking victory in a recent tournament at the Manhattan Chess Club:

Charles Krupin – Elena Groberman
Manhattan Chess Club, 1996

VIENNA GAME

1. e4 e5

2. **Nc3** **Nc6**
3. **Bc4**

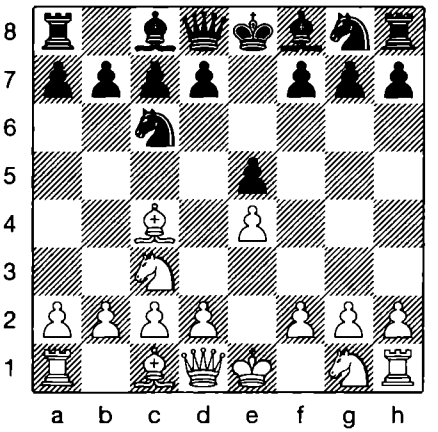


DIAGRAM 167

The move Bc4 is a very aggressive sally, striking at f7 next to Black's King. The move is also dangerous in the Giuoco Piano (see the next section) after 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 (rather than 3. Bb5 as in the Ruy Lopez). We recommend keeping your eyes open for good chances to play Bc4 in King Pawn openings when, as in this game, you may reap much quicker results than in the Ruy Lopez.

3. ... **Bc5**
4. **d3** **Nge7?**

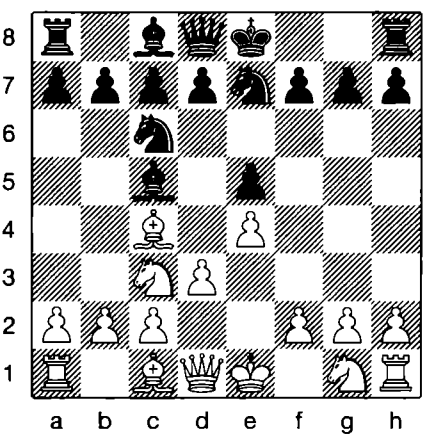


DIAGRAM 168

The move seen in most books is 4. ... Nf6. White now lashes out with two powerful moves that point up the difference between the move played here and that given in opening books.

5. **Bg5** **d6**
6. **Qh5**

With the Black Knight on f6, this move would not be possible. Threats are now suddenly appearing (White obviously wants to play Nd5 to turn up the heat on the pinned e7-Knight). Black must also keep in mind the attack on f7.

6. ... 0-0

7. Nd5

With the exception of 4. ... Nge7—a plausible and innocent enough move at first glance—Black has done little wrong. Yet the second player is faced with a situation of having to find a single saving resource as early as move 7! Do you see Black's one resource?

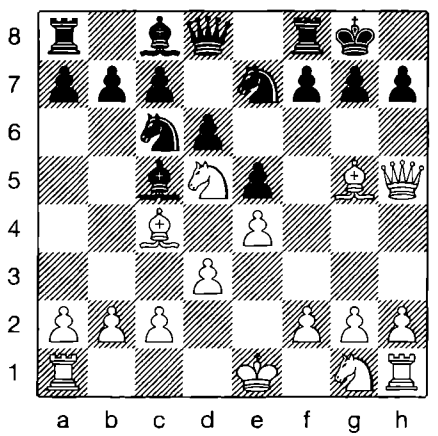


DIAGRAM 169

7. ... h6

Black buckles. The single chance was 7. ... Qd7, with the idea of ... Nxd5 and ... Qg4, trying to trade off some of White's attacking pieces. White would still have an advantage, but Black can offer resistance. After 7. ... h6, however, White sweeps Black off the board.

8. Nf6+ gxf6

9. Bxf6 Qd7

Black sees the right idea two moves too late. White's threat was simply to play 10. Qxh6 and 11. Qg7 mate. By getting the Queen to g4, Black hopes

to defend against this threat. The problem with 9. ... Kh7 is 10. Bg5 or 10. Nf3, intending 11. Ng5+.

10. Qxh6

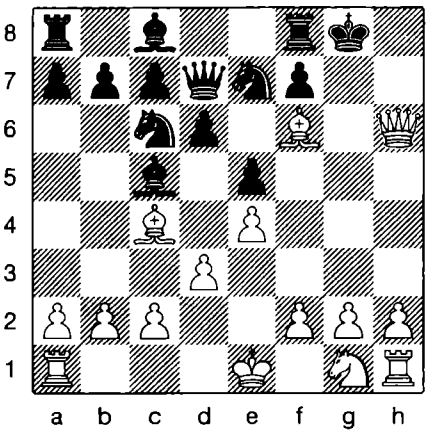


DIAGRAM 170

10. ... Qg4

Defending against 11. Qg7 mate. But a second mate is also possible.

11. Qh8 mate

We have here a good and rather typical example of how the Vienna can yield a powerful attack after an apparently innocent slip (4. ... Nge7?) by Black.

AN ATTACKING OPENING: THE GIUOCO PIANO (EVANS GAMBIT)

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 (4. b4)

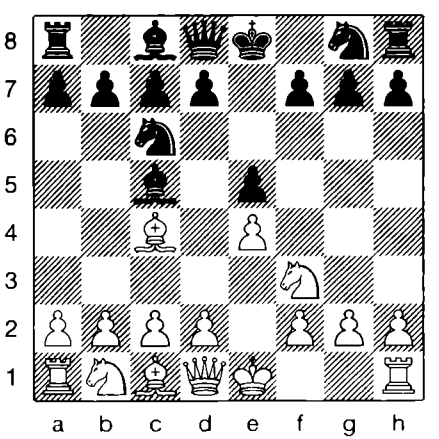


DIAGRAM 171

POSITION AFTER 3. ... BC5

ings. It is mentioned in chess manuscripts dating back to the fifteenth century. Described by some authorities as being "schizophrenic in character," it ranges in mood from the very quiet 4. d3 to the untamed fireworks of 4. b4, which constitutes the Evans Gambit.

After being regarded as the king of all gambits during portions of the nineteenth century, the Evans Gambit spent the first three or four decades of this century in relative disrepute. It has since staged a comeback after Bobby Fischer adopted it in the 1960s. World champion Garry Kasparov employed the gambit in an important tournament game to defeat one of his most dangerous rivals, Viswanathan Anand of India (a recent challenger for the world championship).

With the arrival of large computer databases that can store up to one million tournament games, it has also become possible to provide quantifiable won-loss results for many openings. At the moment, the Evans appears to enjoy the largest winning percentage of any opening for White among master games in the major databases.

The idea of the Evans is a variation on a key theme of the Giuoco Piano, which is to play 4. c3 in order to push in the center with 5. d4, establishing a formidable central pawn phalanx. But the problem with 4. c3 is that the move threatens nothing on its turn and permits Black a solid developing move, 4. ... Nf6 (which also attacks the White pawn on e4), when many of the key positions peter out to equality. In the Evans proper, White gets in c2-c3 with tempo after 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc3 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. b4 Bxb4 5. c3, often followed by 6. d4.

Ilya Kan – Mikhail Botvinnik
Soviet Championship, 1929

GIUOCO PIANO (EVANS GAMBIT)

1.	**e4**	**e5**
2.	**Nf3**	**Nc6**
3.	**Bc4**	**Bc5**

4. b4 Bb6

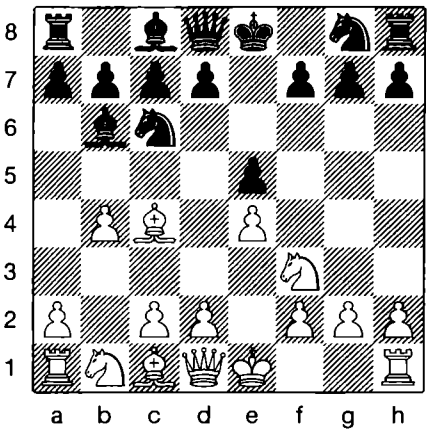


DIAGRAM 172

In fear that White has specially prepared the gambit, 18-year-old Mikhail Botvinnik chooses not to take the pawn.

5. a4 a6

6. Nc3 Nf6

7. Nd5 Nxe4

8. 0-0

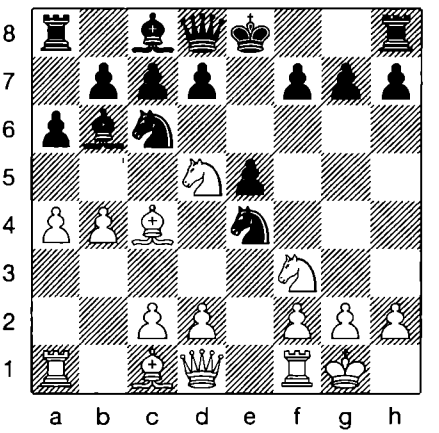


DIAGRAM 173

8. ... 0-0?

As early as move 8, Black makes what may be the decisive mistake. Kan recommends as better either 8. ... d6 or 8. ... Nf6.

9. d3 Nf6

10. Bg5

As in the previous Krupin-Groberman game, White plays a powerful pin on Black's King Knight. The difference is that Krupin faced an amateur, while the Black player in this game would become world champion in 1948.

10.	**...**	**d6**
11.	**Nd2!**	

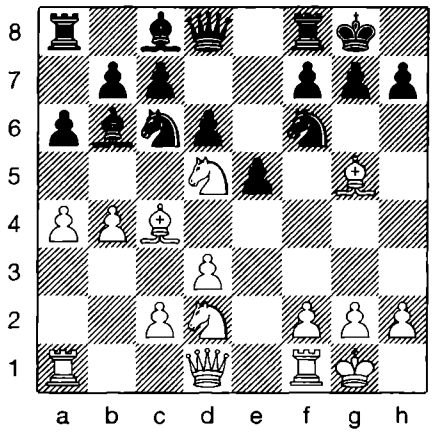


DIAGRAM 174

White threatens to play 12. Ne4 and then Qf3, hitting the pinned Knight on f6, threatening both to win a pawn and eventually to checkmate Black's King by breaking up the Kingside pawn structure. Black tries a desperate remedy that loses a piece.

11.	**...**	**Bg4**
12.	**Bxf6**	**Qc8**
13.	**Nxb6**	**cxb6**
14.	**f3**	**Be6**
15.	**Bh4**	**Nxb4**
16.	**Be7**	**Qc5+**
17.	**Kh1**	**Rfe8**
18.	**Ne4**	**Qc6**

19. Bxd6 Black resigns

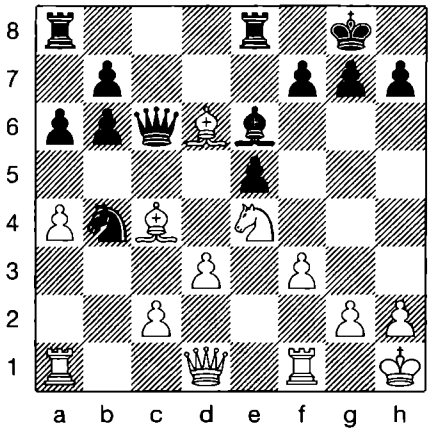


DIAGRAM 175

The preceding two illustrative games show how powerful White's attack in the opening may become with active pieces such as the King Bishop striking f7 and the Queen Knight hitting d5. In both games Black made losing moves that looked completely plausible yet led to speedy defeats.

8 King Pawn Chess Movies

HERE IS A CHESS MOVIE THAT IN REAL LIFE had a special kind of ticket line to get in. The story about this Sicilian Defense, which was played in the 1962 Russian Team Championship, is that players from the other teams became so mesmerized watching this masterpiece unfold that they forfeited their own games when the time on their chess clocks expired!

CINEMATIC MASTERPIECE

Rashid Nezhmetdinov, noted for his chess artistry rather than his competitive results, is White. Oleg Chernikov is Black. The opening moves: 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3.

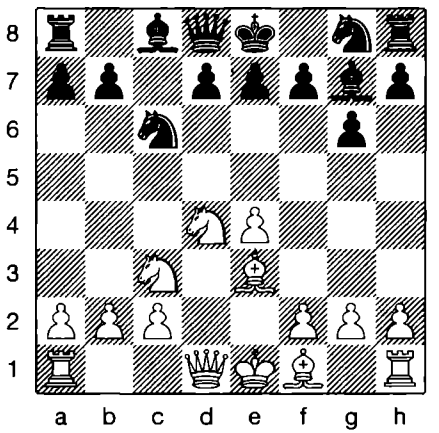


DIAGRAM 176

1. The opening play continues 6. ... Nf6 7. Bc4 0-0 8. Bb3 Ng4. A famous trap here is 8. ... Na5? 9. e5 Ne8 10. Bxf7+ Rxf7 11. Ne6, when White wins the Queen. But opening theory is not the important thing here. The combinations—the dancing of the pieces—are what make this game special.

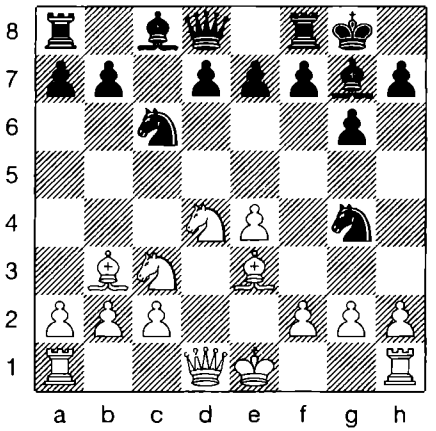


DIAGRAM 177

2. After 9. Qxg4 Nxd4 10. Qh4, White appears to be heading for a position considered drawn virtually by force. One popular alternative is 10. Qd1.

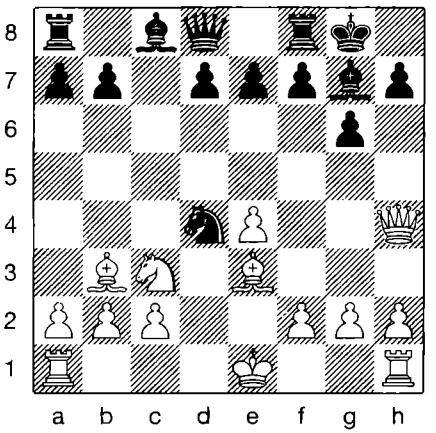


DIAGRAM 178

3. Play continued 10. ... Qa5 11. 0-0 Bf6. Nothing in the game so far suggests that either player has anything more ambitious in mind than to pursue a draw by repetition with 12. Qh6 Bg7 13. Qh4. Bobby Fischer tried 12. Qg4 in a match game but got nothing after 12. ... d6 13. Qd1 Nc6 14. Qd3 b6!.

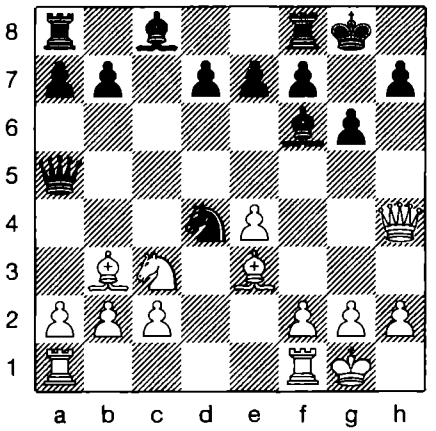


DIAGRAM 179

4. As Nezhmetdinov sat thinking for over 40 minutes, his opponent must have been gloating that White should have done his opening planning earlier. Then came the thunderous, 12. Qxf6!!?, a seemingly witless Queen sacrifice. White surrenders his strongest piece—and for what? Black found the best reply, 12. ... Ne2+!, temporarily deflecting White's Knight from the center. (See Diagram 121 on page 96.)

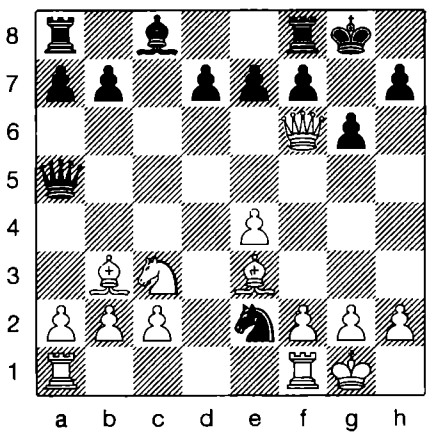


DIAGRAM 180

5. White's idea emerges after 13. Nxe2 exf6 14. Nc3 Re8. He will post a Bishop on d4, a Knight on d5 and then attack the Black King with minor pieces; analysts later claimed that 14. ... d5 15. Nxd5 Be6 16. Nxf6+ Kg7 17. Bd4 Kh6 refutes the sacrifice. But White intended to play the unclear 15. Bd4.

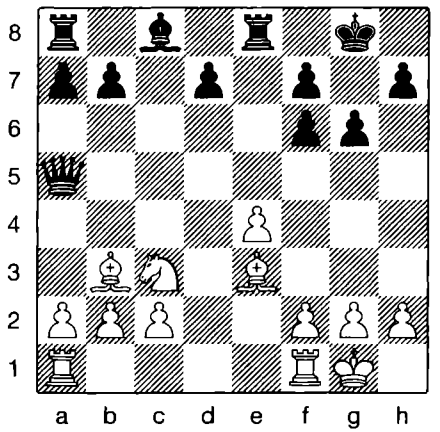


DIAGRAM 181

6. As Black's Queen spectates on a5 and his Queenside pieces snooze, White builds the attack on f6 implacably: 15. Nd5 Re6 16. Bd4 Kg7. Nezhmetdinov was famous for his brave play, and he momentarily conducts this attack with only Bishop and Knight, convinced that Black's Queenside forces are paralyzed.

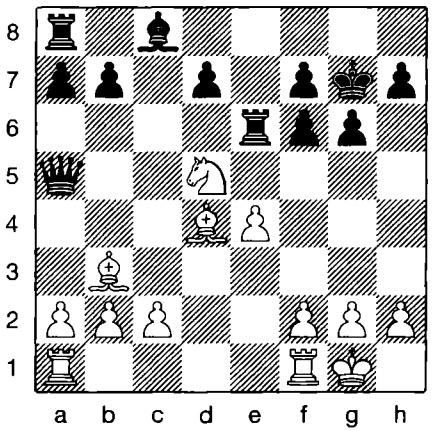


DIAGRAM 182

7. Watch how White calmly arrays his Queen Rook against f6: 17. Rad1 d6 18. Rd3 Bd7 19. Rf3. So simple—and foreseen when playing 12. Qxf6. A sample of Black's difficulties after 17. Rad1 is 17. ... b5 18. Bc3 Qd8 19. Nxf6 Rxf6 20. Rd6. In great chess, material is important, but strategy is supreme. This game revolves around Black's weak f6 square.

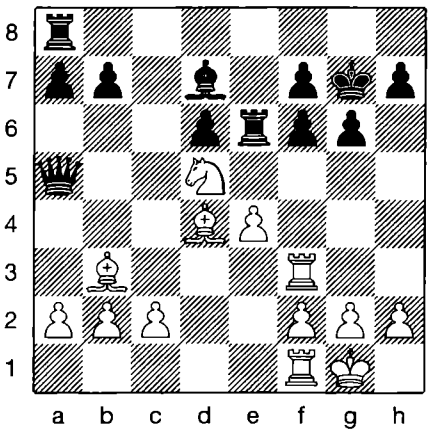


DIAGRAM 183

8. Black must develop and redeploy his pieces by 19. ... Bb5 20. Bc3 Qd8. From this point onward, sacrificial themes appear on every move. Well coordinated pieces can perform miracles even when the other side has more material. That's yet another lesson of this game.

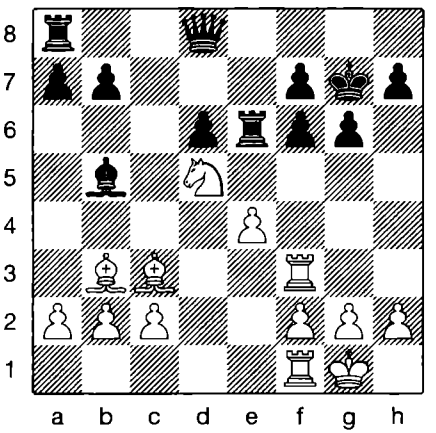


DIAGRAM 184

9. White plows straight ahead, gladly taking the consequences of his play by 21. Nxf6 Be2 22. Nxh7+!. If Black tries 21. ... Bxf1, White wins by 22. Ng4+ Kg8 23. Nh6+ Kf8 24. Nxf7 Qe7 25. Ng5+ Ke8 26. Nxe6. The checking action of the Knight is possible because of the weak f6 and h6 squares.

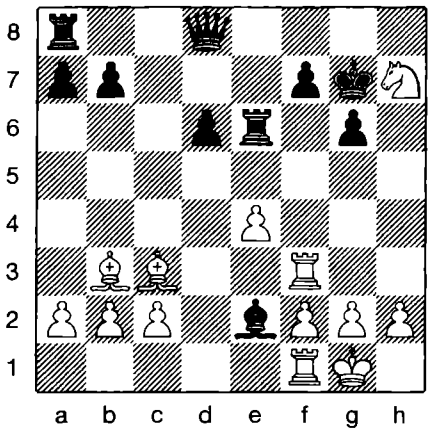


DIAGRAM 185

10. Black rightly declines the Knight by 22. ... Kg8 23. Rh3! Re5. On 22. ... Kxh7, Nezhmetdinov intended 23. Rxf7+ Kh6 24. Bd2+ g5 25. Bxe6 Bxf1 26. Bf5 Qh8 27. h4 Be2 28. Bxg5+ Kh5 29. f3 Bxf3 30. gxf3 Qd4+ 31. Kg2 Rh8 32. Rf6, with 33. Bg4 mate to follow. Phew!

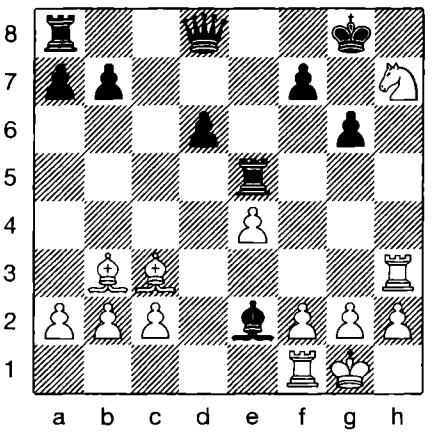


DIAGRAM 186

11. How to continue the attack? Black clogged the a1–h8 diagonal with his 23rd move, thereby preventing ideas such as Ng5 and Rh8 mate. The answer is to throw more sacrificial kindling on the fire by 24. f4 Bxf1 25. Kxf1. At this point, Black has Queen and two Rooks against Rook, two Bishops and Knight!

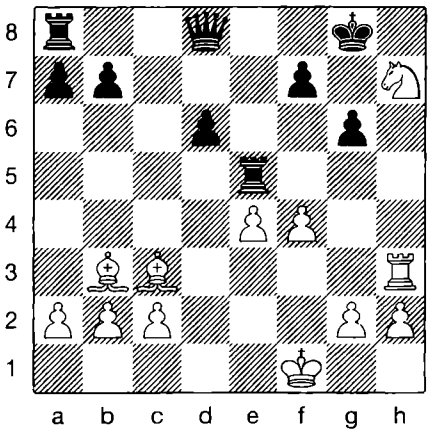


DIAGRAM 187

12. The storm abates for just a moment with 25....Rc8 (hoping to sacr fice the Rook for the Bishop on c3) 26. Bd4 b5 (hoping to block th b3-Bishop with ... Rc4). The normal material values of the piec mean little here. What counts is how the Bishops command diagona against Black's King.

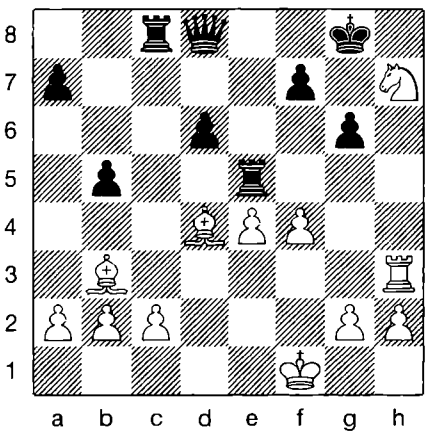


DIAGRAM 188

13. White conducts the attack as though Black were not far ahead i material. He plays a seemingly leisurely 27. Ng5! Rc7, but there come the sockdolager, 28. Bxf7+!. Notice that on 27. ... Rc4, White wir with 28. Bxc4 bxc4 29. Bxe5 dxe5 30. Rh8+ (deflection) 30 ... Kxh 31. Nxf7+. This deflection-and-fork theme grows logically out of th previous play.

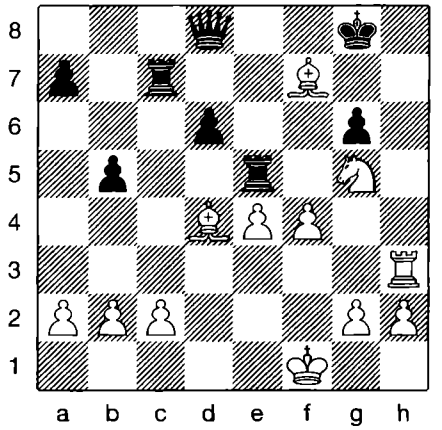


DIAGRAM 189

14. Black must capture the intruder with 28 ... Rxf7 because 28. ... Kg7 fails against 29. Ne6+, a neat royal fork. White now gets to play the deflection sacrifice, 29. Rh8+. Everything clicks in spite of White's reduced forces.

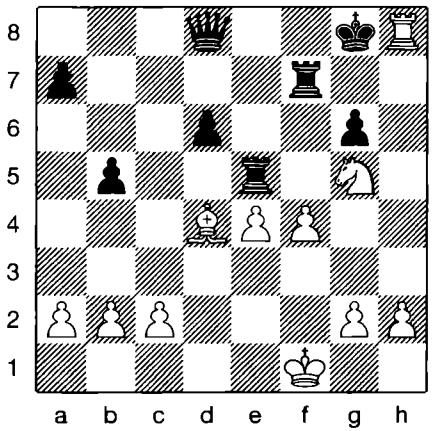


DIAGRAM 190

15. The finishing touches were 29. ... Kxh8 30. Nxf7+ Kh7 31. Nxd8 Rxe4 32. Nc6 Rxf4+ 33. Ke2. After all of the fireworks, the anticlimax of an endgame rather than the climax of mate has been reached—a denouement typical of top-flight master chess.

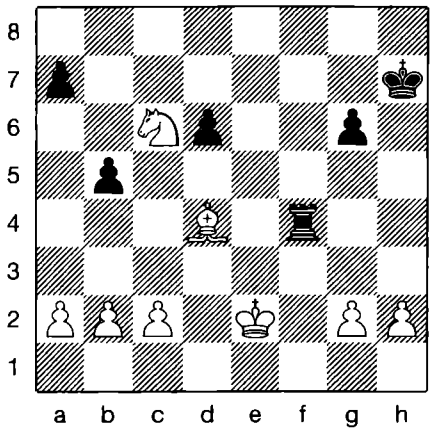


DIAGRAM 191

16. But in this magical battle—to paraphrase Churchill—the beginning of the endgame is more than the end of the beginning. For Black resigns, rather than prolong the agony. White's two pieces and extra pawn will surely prevail, especially since Black's Queenside pawns are weak. As for the audience, it stood and applauded a cinematic masterpiece.

KUDOS FOR THE BROADSWORD

Popular taste so favors the lightning thrusts of the rapier that there are few kudos for the broadsword. Yet the broadsword is no less deadly, and its equivalent in chess, the gambit, can be wielded with delightful and dreadful effects by both non-master and grandmaster. Take, for example, the following duel between two amateurs, which was fought at the 1985 World Open in Philadelphia. As White, Philip Corbin unsheathes the Smith-Morra Gambit of the Sicilian Defense and cuts through the Black position of Peter Chubinsky with swipes as wide and powerful as those of many grandmasters. The result is a beautiful game that should inspire amateurs everywhere with the thought that they, too, can play beautiful chess. The opening moves are 1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. c3.

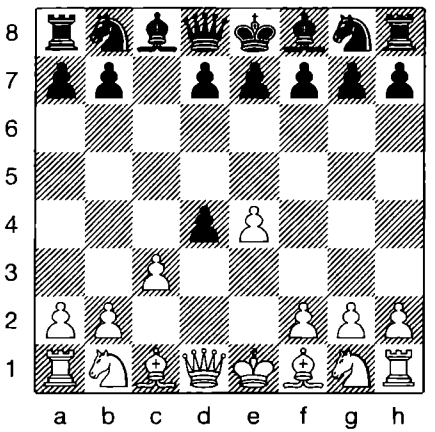


DIAGRAM 192

1. Black declines the gambit pawn on c3 by 3. ... Nf6, developing his King Knight. Both sides then deploy some minor pieces: 4. e5 Nd5 5. Bc4 Nb6 6. Bb3 Nc6 7. Nf3 e6 8. 0-0.

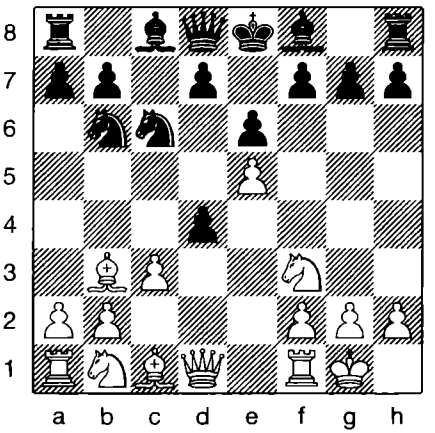


DIAGRAM 193

2. With 8. ... d6, Black again eschews the c-pawn and instead tries to relieve the cramp created by White's e-pawn. White responds with 9. Bg5, and Black errs with 9. ... Qc7, placing the Queen where it often becomes a target in Smith-Morra positions. Correct was 9. ... Be7 and then ... 0-0.

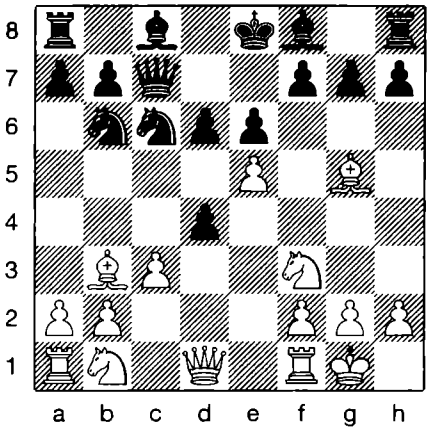


DIAGRAM 194

3. With 10. cxd4, White simultaneously bolsters his e-pawn, creates a square for his Queen Knight and opens the c-file for action against Black's Queen. Black tries to continue development with 10. ... Bd7, which is met by 11. Nc3. Ominously, Black has yet to castle.

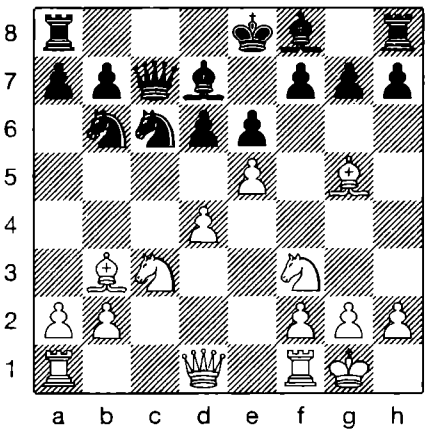


DIAGRAM 195

4. After 11. ... dxe5 12. Rc1, Black concedes his error on move 9 and removes the Queen from the c-file with 12. ... Qb8. White breaks in the center with 13. d5, a thematic thrust that threatens both daylight robbery (14. dxc6) and regicide (14. dxe6). Is there a defense?

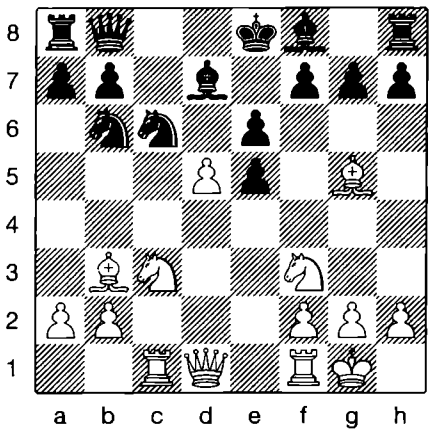


DIAGRAM 196

5. Black chops wood with 13. ... Nxd5 14. Nxd5 exd5, a time-honored defensive strategy designed to cut down on the other side's attacking forces. But 15. Qxd5 contains the threatened broadsword hack, 16. Qxf7 mate. Black assigns a Bishop to the royal bodyguard, 15. ... Be6.

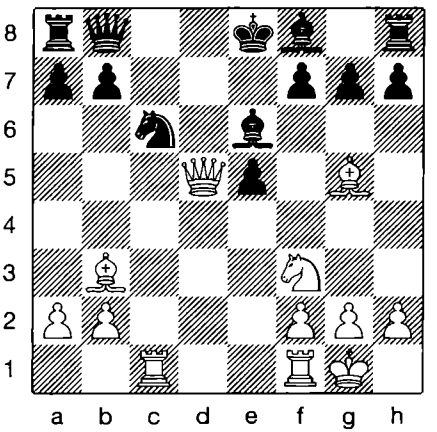


DIAGRAM 197

6. White sidesteps with 16. Qb5, intending the mortal blow of 17. Rxc6. Black attempts a parry with 16. ... Bd7. But pins are as deadly in chess as in fencing, and Black's best defensive chance was 16. ... a6, pricking the pinning Queen. Now White chops the Knight with 17. Rxc6!.

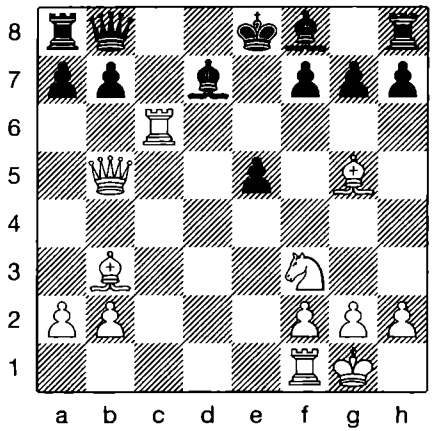


DIAGRAM 198

7. Black is desperate, trying 17. ... Bd6. The obvious 17. ... Bxc6 runs into 18. Nxe5 Bxb5 19. Bxf7 mate, while 17. ... bxc6 is speared by 18. Qc4 Be6 19. Qxc6+ Bd7 20. Nxe5, intending 21. Bxf7 mate. The attack continues with 18. Qd5 Be6 19. Rc8+!, another elegant Rook offer.

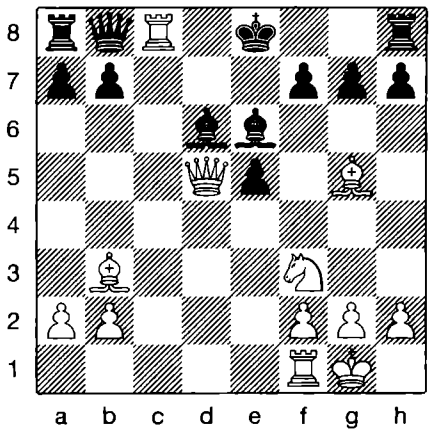


DIAGRAM 199

8. Notice the two Black Bishops. Black has no other pieces beyond his first rank. Forced is 19. ... Qxc8, and White takes with 20. Qxd6, hoping for 20. ... Qd7 21. Ba4, winning. Black sees that pitfall and answers with 20. ... f6 21. Re1.

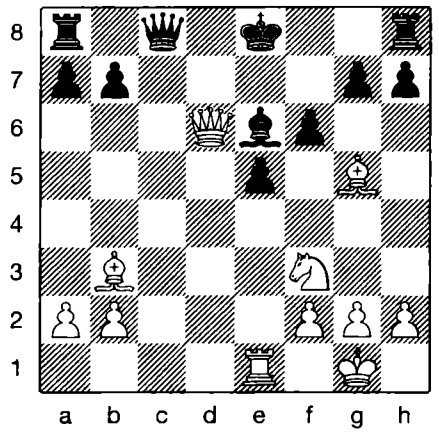


DIAGRAM 200

9. White's mastery of the open central files and Black's failure to castle tell a typical Smith-Morra story. The problem with either 21. ... Kf7 or 21. ... fxg5 is 22. Nxe5(+). And so a beleaguered monarch attempts to flee by 21. ... Bxb3, which is cut short by 22. Rxe5+ Kf7 23. Re7+.

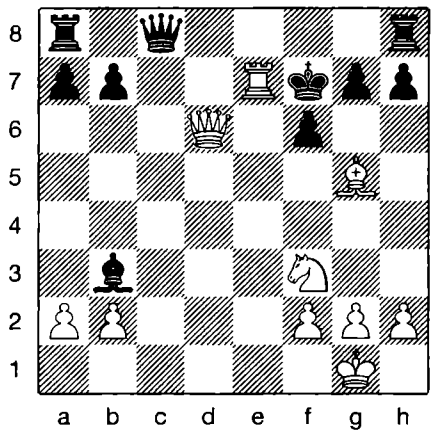


DIAGRAM 201

10. After 23. ... Kg6, White switches from slashing away in the center to relentlessly pursuing his royal quarry. The move is 24. Qg3. An attempt to back up against the wall with 23. ... Kg8 gets gunned down by 24. axb3 Qc6 25. Rxg7+ Kxg7 26. Bxf6+ Kg8 27. Qg3+ Kf7 28. Qg7+ Ke6 29. Nd4+ and 30. Nxc6.

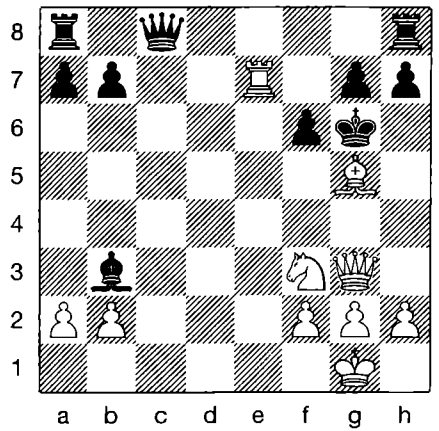


DIAGRAM 202

11. Black's options are narrowed to relatively slow dismemberment (24. ... Kh5 25. Rxg7 Qg4 26. Bf4 Qxg3 27. fxg3 Be6 28. h3 f5 29. g4+ fxg4 30. hxg4+ Bxg4 31. Rg5+ Kh6 32. Rxg4+ Kh5 33. Rg5+ Kh6 34. Ne5 and 35 Ng4 mate) or speedy dicing by 24. ... h5 25. Bxf6+ Qg4, which is the game continuation.

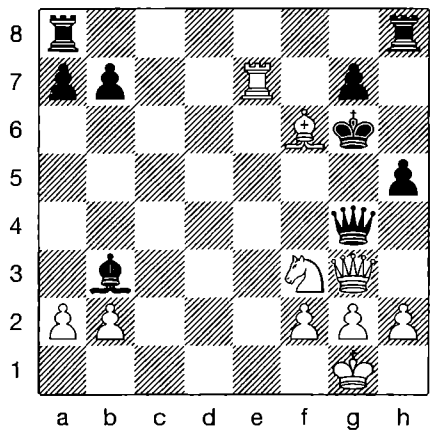


DIAGRAM 203

12. Finis after 26. Rxg7+ Kxf6 27. Qe5 mate. The lesson of this game is not merely the power of White's aggression in the center and against f7, which are typical themes in the Smith-Morra Gambit. Rather, it is the sustained attack that you can summon by choosing to play a highly tactical gambit.

And speaking of the Smith-Morra Gambit, it is one of our favorite weapons against the Sicilian Defense. It is aggressive, quite sound, and a fine surprise against Sicilian players who are well booked against the common continuation of 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 and who are often unprepared against the less common Smith-Morra Gambit.

9 Subtle Queen Pawn Openings

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A PAWN MOVE MAKES. The kind of game tha develops from 1. d4 or from 1. e4 frequently differs dramatically. If the d-pawn openings usually develop relatively slowly with decisive actior reserved for the middlegame, many e-pawn openings involve hand-to-hand fighting directly in the opening—often in the first 10 moves or so.

When White begins with 1. e4, he immediately frees the way for his King Bishop to go to c4, where it strikes at f7, a key square for attacking the Black King. (Compare this kind of attack with 1. d4, which opens up the Queen Bishop, which may then be moved to f4 [not c4] and which then hits c7 rather than endangering the King by attacking f7.) In addition, speedy development of the Kingside pieces permits early castling for White, which brings the Rook into play. The end result can be a very quick win for White against Black, if the second player makes a few weak moves. Among non-masters, the e-pawn openings usually lead to quicker wins (or losses) than the d-pawn debuts.

As for play at the higher levels, grandmasters prefer e- or d-pawn openings largely as a matter of personal taste. Equally great players will disagree as to whether 1. e4 or 1. d4 is the better move. Some world champions such as Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov have preferred 1. e4; some titleholders such as Jose Capablanca and Mikhail Botvinnik have played 1. d4 predominantly. But most masters, while holding definite views as to whether 1. e4 or 1. d4 is the better move for their style and temperament, do not have fixed views as to which move is intrinsically superior.

The current thinking is that for all practical purposes, the moves are of about equal strength. Choose the opening scheme that better suits your approach to chess.

THE POSITIONAL SIMILARITY BETWEEN 1. D4 AND 1. E4

The basic immediate positional idea of 1. d4 or 1. e4 is about the same. In both instances White wishes eventually to place the center pawns on both d4 and e4, controlling and occupying the key center squares. Black can hinder this plan or chip away at it by answering 1. d4 with 1. ... d5 and 1. e4 with 1. ... e5.

The most important difference between beginning with the Queen or King pawns is that the Black Queen pawn is guarded by the Black Queen, while the Black King pawn has no immediate protection. Thus, after 1. e4 e5, when White plays 2. Nf3, he is threatening to win a pawn by 3. Nxe5. White has no such threat after 1. d4 d5 2. Nc3 because 3. Nxd5?? Qxd5 gives Black a piece for a pawn. Since a piece attack on d5 will not work immediately, White usually plays 2. c4:

QUEEN'S GAMBIT

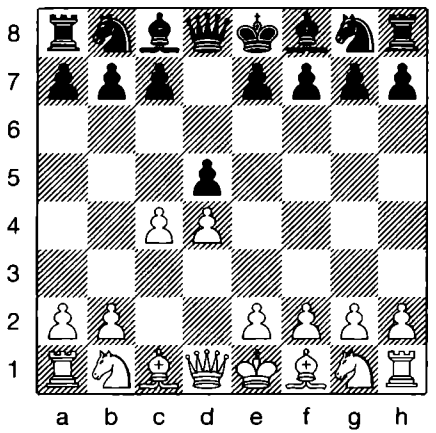


DIAGRAM 204

BLACK TO MOVE

White threatens to get the better position with 3. cxd5, trading a flank pawn for a more valuable center one. Thus Black usually guards his center with 2. ... e6 so that after 3. cxd5 exd5, he has open lines for both of his Bishops in compensation for losing a central pawn for a flank pawn. Black can also play 2. ... c6 as in the Slav Defense (see next section) with the same idea of shoring up his central pawn presence.

Here is a famous Queen's Gambit in which White grabs space and directs his Bishops along open lines to win brilliantly. Indeed, the loser as Black—a famous master who championed the virtues of 1. e4—was so impressed by his opponent's play that he began to play 1. d4 himself on most occasions.

Richard Reti – Rudolph Spielmann
Trentschin-Teplitz, 1928

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

1.	**d4**	**Nf6**
2.	**c4**	**e6**
3.	**Nc3**	**d5**
4.	**Bg5**	**Nbd7**

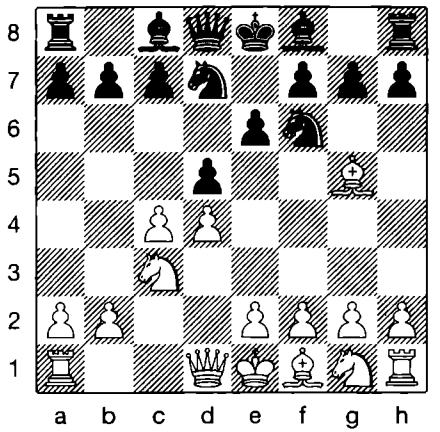


DIAGRAM 205

An old trap that has snagged many a White player is the attempt to win the d-pawn by 5. cxd5 exd5 6. Nxd5? Nxd5 7. Bxd8 Bb4+, when Black comes out a piece ahead.

5.	**e3**	**c6**
6.	**a3**	**Be7**
7.	**Nf3**	**0-0**
8.	**Qc2**	

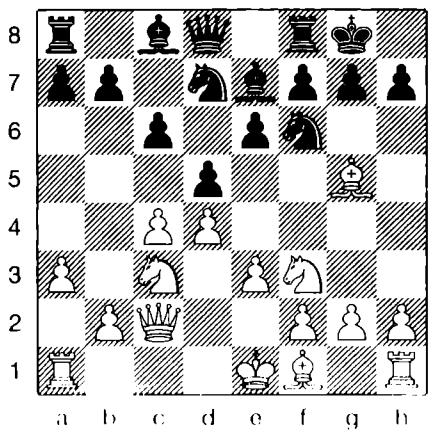


DIAGRAM 206

8. ... **a6?**

In chess, a move like this one, which turns out to be irrelevant to the demands of the specific position, is called a loss of time. Black should instead opt for the freeing maneuver of 8. ... dxc4 9. Bxc4 Nd5 10. Bxe7 Qxe7 11. 0-0 Nxc3 12. Qxc3 b6.

9.	**Rd1**	**Re8**
10.	**Bd3**	**h6**
11.	**Bh4**	**dxc4**
12.	**Bxc4**	**Nd5**
13.	**Bg3**	**Qa5**
14.	**0-0**	**Nxc3**
15.	**bxc3**	**b5**

If 15. ... Qxa3, White wins the Queen by 16. Ra1.

16.	**Ba2**	**Nf8**

It would be too dangerous to waste time grabbing the pawn on a3.

17.	**Ne5**	**Bb7**

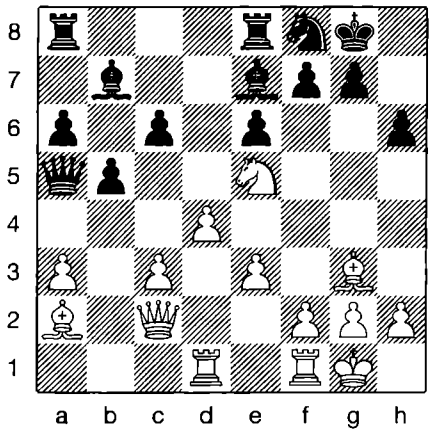


DIAGRAM 207

18. f4!

The idea is to open the f-file for White's Rook and to increase the scope of the Bishop on a2 against e6 and f7.

18.	**...**	**Bf6**
19.	**f5**	**Bxe5**
20.	**Bxe5**	**Qd8**

21. fxe6 fxe6

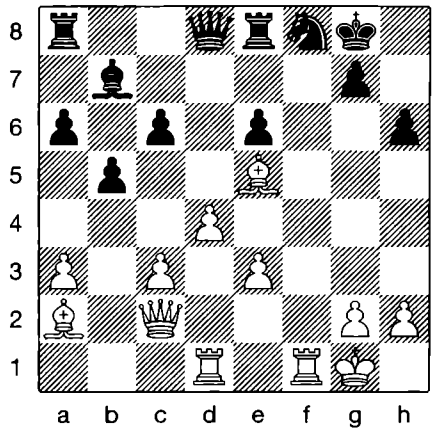


DIAGRAM 208

22. Rxf8+!

This sacrifice is meant to destroy the single piece guarding such sensitive Kingside squares as g6 and h7. Watch how White soon invades the Kingside once this Knight is gone.

22. ... Rxf8

23. Bxe6+ Kh8

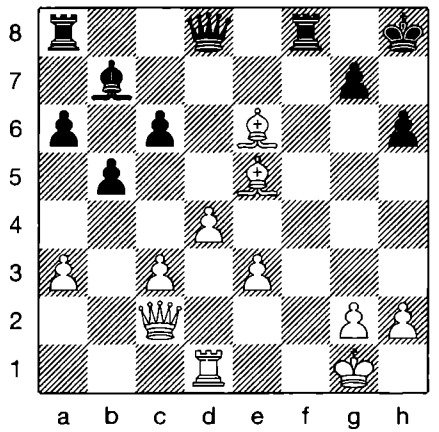


DIAGRAM 209

24. Ba2!

Beautiful Bishop play. Now the piece will go to b1 to form a Queen-and-Bishop battery against h7 to drive the Black King out into the open.

24. ... Qg5

25. Bb1 Kg8

26. Qh7+ Kf7

27. Bxg7!

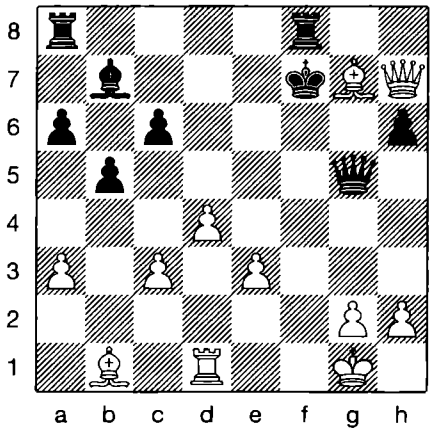


DIAGRAM 210

27. ... Qxe3+

On 27. ... Qxg7, White plays 28. Rf1+, winning the Queen.

28. Kh1 Qe2

29. Be5+ Ke6

30. Qg6+ Ke7

31. Qd6+ Black resigns

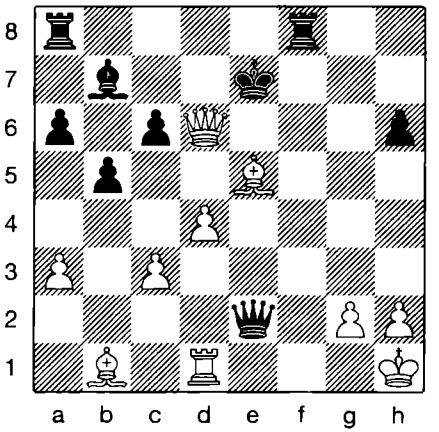


DIAGRAM 211

Checkmate is coming up.

THE SLAV DEFENSE

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6

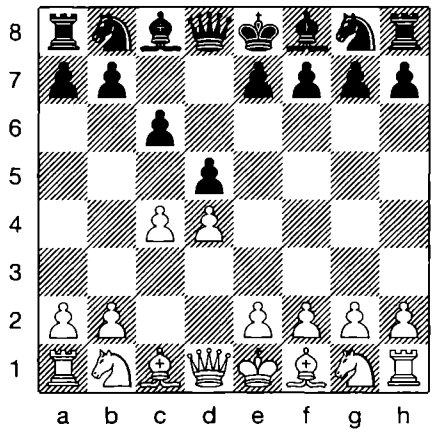


DIAGRAM 212

The Slav is usually categorized as a branch of the Queen's Gambit Declined. As in the Orthodox Variation of the Queen's Gambit (with 2. ... e6 for Black), the second player bolsters his d-pawn with an immediate pawn push—in this case, to c6 rather than e6. Unlike the Orthodox Variation of the Queen's Gambit, the Slav Defense does not block in Black's Queen Bishop and may also support a Queenside pawn advance (with ... b7-b5) using c6 as the base. On the other hand, an early ... e7-e6 for Black helps develop the dark-squared Bishop and prepares for early castling. In short, a typical tradeoff of strengths and drawbacks.

THE GRUENFELD DEFENSE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5

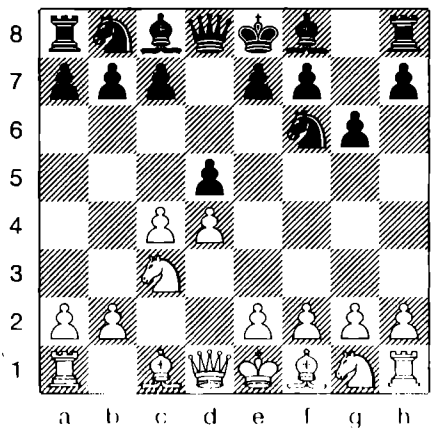


DIAGRAM 213

center right away and does not attempt to maintain a pawn presence at d5. Instead, Black tries a hypermodern strategy of permitting White to establish a strong center in the hope that it proves shaky and can be sniped at from the flanks by Bishops (often on g7 and b7).

The verdict on the Gruenfeld is that it is a mainstream opening eminently suitable for both sides, providing plenty of scope for the better player eventually to win. In other words, assuming reasonable play by both sides, the game will not be decided in the opening or directly because of the opening; it will be decided by the player who hatches the deeper plans in the middlegame or ending.

Here is a Gruenfeld that looks like many other Gruenfelds. Both sides set about pursuing their respective strategies: White sets up a strong center and grabs space; Black—the immortal Bobby Fischer—engages in some very high-powered sniping from the flanks, successfully undermining the center with pawn thrusts and piece play. Notice how White actually loses: His mighty looking center seems to fall over like a building too large for its structural foundation. In a successful Gruenfeld for White, the first player secures his center from attack, consolidates his extra space and then slowly inches forward with his central pawn mass, further constricting Black, and perhaps eventually Queening his d-pawn or forcing Black to sacrifice decisive material to prevent such a coronation.

Ben Greenwald – Robert J. Fischer
New York Open, 1963

GRUENFELD DEFENSE

1.	**d4**	**Nf6**
2.	**c4**	**g6**
3.	**Nc3**	**d5**
4.	**cxd5**	**Nxd5**
5.	**e4**	**Nxc3**
6.	**bxc3**	**Bg7**
7.	**Bc4**	**Nc6**

8. a4 Na5

9. Ba2

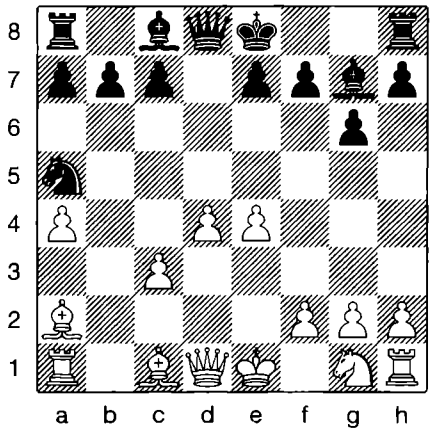


DIAGRAM 214

9. ... c5

Black begins to undermine White's center.

10. Ne2 cxd4

11. cxd4 b6

12. Qd3 0-0

13. Bd2 Bb7

14. 0-0 e6

15. Rfd1 Qd7

16. Bxa5 bxa5

17. Bc4 Rab8

18. Ra2?

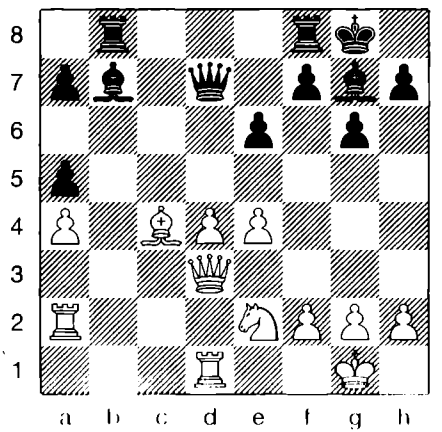


DIAGRAM 215

Suddenly, Black attacks the a-pawn, which can be defended only with difficulty; in addition, Black's move opens the b-file for the Rook to go to b4, increasing the pressure on White's center. White should have played 18. Bb5 to stop Black from blowing away White's center.

19.	**Nc3**	**Rb4**
20.	**d5**	**Bb7**
21.	**Bb5**	**Qd6**
22.	**Ne2**	**exd5**
23.	**exd5**	**Qxd5**
24.	**Qxd5**	**Bxd5**
25.	**Rxd5**	**Rb1+**
26.	**Nc1**	**Rxc1+**
27.	**Bf1**	**Re8**
28.	**f4**	**Ree1**
29.	**Rf2**	**Bf8**

White resigns

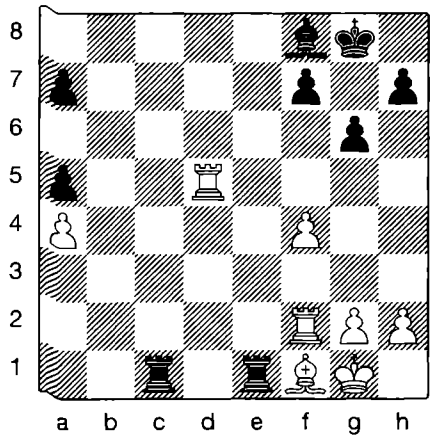


DIAGRAM 216

Black intends to play ... Bc5, which will pick up the Rook on f2, leaving Black with a large material advantage.

THE ALBIN COUNTER GAMBIT

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e5

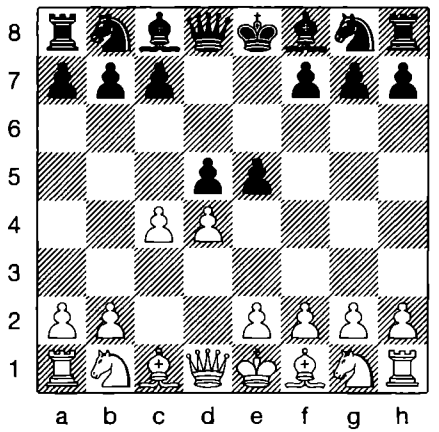


DIAGRAM 217

The Albin is for those players who as Black want to challenge White's initiative as early as move 2 by staking out an ambitious pawn position in the center and by opening lines for both Bishops. In many instances, the Albin leads either to a scintillating win by Black or to a speedy White crush of Black's arguably foolhardy ambition. In spite of the White win in the illustrative game, we recommend the Albin for intermediate players wishing to sharpen their tactics.

In terms of opening traps, the most common catastrophe for White is 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e5 3. dxe5 d4 4. e3 Bb4+ 5. Bd2 dxe3 6. Bxb4? exf2+ 7. Ke2 (otherwise, Black captures the Queen on d1) 7. ... fxg1=N+!.

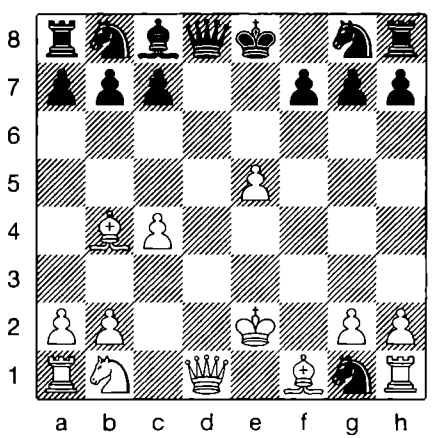


DIAGRAM 218

AFTER 7. ... FxG1=N+!

Black underpromotes with a check, and in the process he dislocates White's King while also disrupting his pawn structure. Black has a won

position here because 8. Rxg1 is answered by 8. ... Bg4+, skewering White's Queen. White's only playable line is 8. Ke1 Qh4+ 9. Kd2, when he stands very poorly.

The strongest lines against the Albin are what might be called heavyweight positional continuations. If Black can really challenge White in the center by staking out an equal amount of space as early as move 2, then one is entitled to ask where is the first-move initiative that is conferred upon White. Black appears to be playing very daringly, leaving his e5-pawn, for example, unprotected. Can White exploit Black's boldness?

Yes, he can. The preferred method for White is to take the e5-pawn and then develop very soundly, attempting to hold the extra material until there is a chance to return it with advantage. Here is a model performance by White against the Albin:

Mike Montchalin – Jon Jacobs
U.S. Junior Open, 1971

ALBIN COUNTER GAMBIT

1.	**d4**	**d5**
2.	**c4**	**e5**
3.	**dxe5**	**d4**
4.	**Nf3**	**Nc6**

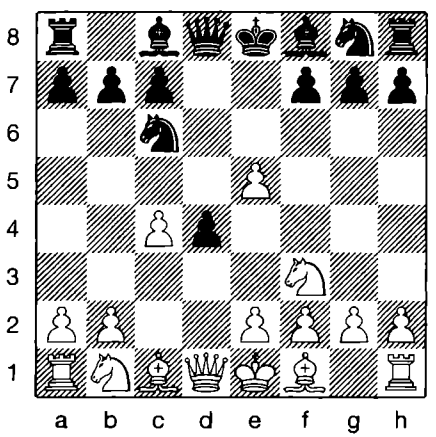


DIAGRAM 219

5. a3

This move takes away the check on b4 from Black's King Bishop, and as play develops this Bishop cannot find a good diagonal for itself.

5.	**...**	**a5**
6.	**b3**	**Bc5**

7. Bb2 Bf5

8. g3

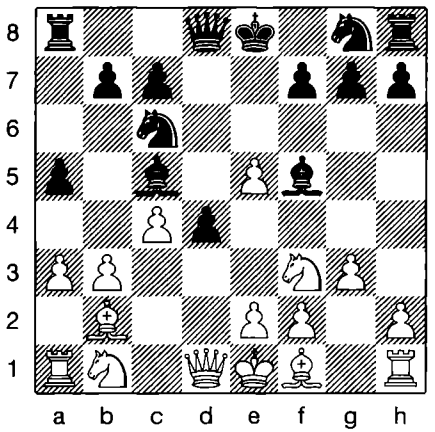


DIAGRAM 220

Here is a way to meet the Albin: After constricting Black's King Bishop with 5. a3, White prepares to place his own King Bishop on g2, where it will exert considerable pressure along the central a1-a8 diagonal.

8. ... Nge7

9. Bg2 Qd7

10. Nbd2 Ng6

11. 0-0

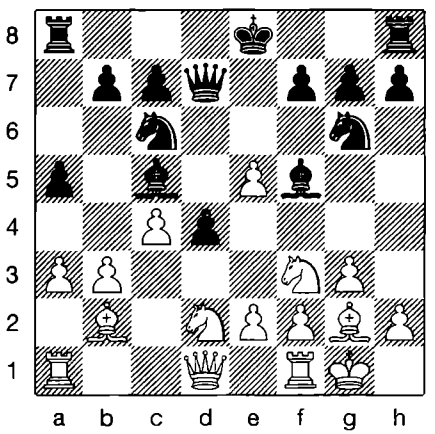


DIAGRAM 221

11. ... 0-0?!

Black would do better to play 11. ... Ngxe5 12. Nxe5 Nxe5 13. Bxb7, though White has the advantage.

12. b4! axb4

13. Nb3 Bc7

Black's King Bishop is now more passively placed, and White starts to gain space as well as to deploy his pieces to ever more aggressive posts.

What went wrong for Black? While White harmoniously completed his development (notice how 5. a3 helped to prepare 12. b4, which forced back the Black King Bishop), Black spent quite a few moves trying to do little more than recover his lost pawn by capturing White's pawn on e5. He played 8. ... Nge7 and 10. ... Ng6 with the idea of reestablishing material parity. On those same moves, White played 8. g3 to provide a long diagonal for his King Bishop and 10. Nbd2 to prepare for 13. Nb3.

The lesson here is that it is tough for Black to stay in the game when he must direct his moves merely to recover what was his at the beginning (material equality) while White directs his moves toward putting his pieces on their best squares and grabbing more space.

14. axb4

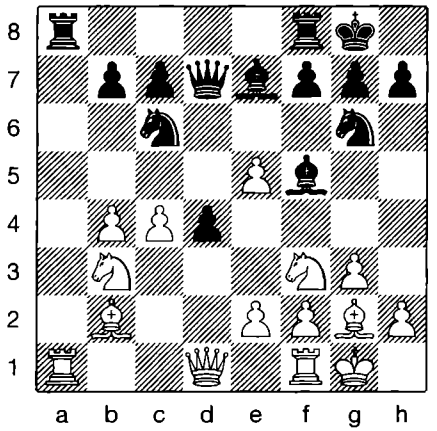


DIAGRAM 222

14. ... Bxb4

A bit better is 14. ... Ncxe5 15. Nxe5 Nxe5 16. Qxd4. White still has a clear advantage, but Black will be able to offer longer resistance.

15.	**Nbxd4**	**Ncxe5**
16.	**Nxe5**	**Nxe5**
17.	**Nxf5**	**Qxf5**
18.	**Qd4**	**Rae8**
19.	**Bxb7**	**Bd6**

20. Kg2 **Re6**

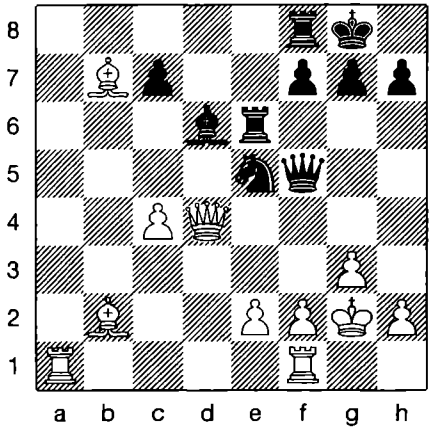


DIAGRAM 223

21. f4 **Qc2**

22. Rac1 **Qg6**

23. Bd5 **Re7**

24. c5 **Black resigns**

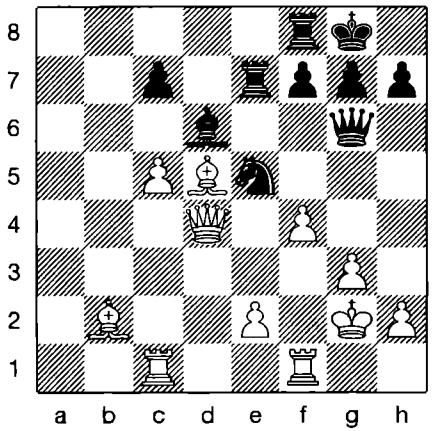


DIAGRAM 224

This game suggests that after 5. a3, Black should look for another plan beyond the obvious idea of ... Ne7 and ... Ng6 to recover the gambited pawn.

THE NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4

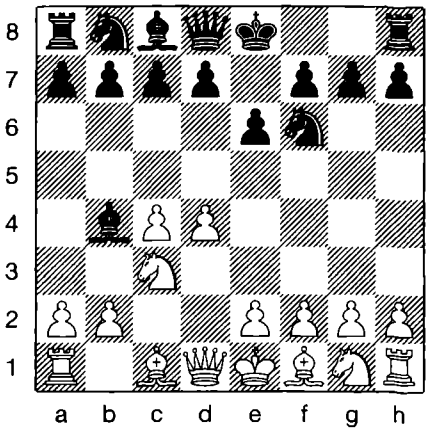


DIAGRAM 225

World champion Garry Kasparov has written that "[T]his defense offers Black excellent chances to play for a win without exposing himself to unnecessary risk. His third move [3. ... Bb4, pinning the Knight on c3] exerts indirect influence on the e4 square, a pressure necessary to avoid the construction of a formidable White pawn center." Kasparov is saying that by putting a Knight on f6 and a Bishop on b4, Black prevents White from immediately playing e2-e4, grabbing space in the center.

Of course, after a timely a2-a3, White often forces Black to trade his Bishop for the Knight on c3, leaving the first player with the so-called "two Bishops," viewed by most masters as advantageous. Yet the resulting positions frequently become locked, and White has difficulties exploiting the maneuverability of the Bishops. In addition, he has doubled c-pawns that often come under attack. Kasparov has said, "With its durability and dynamism, it [the Nimzo-Indian] is the Queen pawn equivalent of the Ruy Lopez, offering a stern test of skill to both players."

Some would say that the most principled attempt to test Black's opening is the Saemisch Variation of 4. a3, immediately attacking the Black Bishop and forcing the opponent to exchange the Bishop for the Knight. By playing 4. a3, White is arrogantly telling Black that he does not fear the doubled c-pawns and wants the Bishop pair. In effect, White is saying that Black's whole idea is wrong, and he will prove it by letting him put it into effect as soon as possible.

Once rid of the pin on the c3-Knight, White then often tries f2-f3 and e2-e4—an immediate expansion in the center with the idea of attacking the Black King by using the superior striking power of the two Bishops.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6

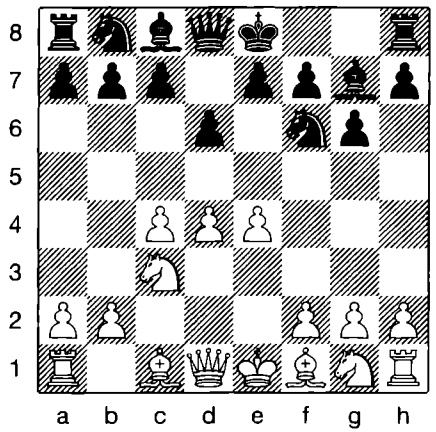


DIAGRAM 226

The King's Indian Defense came into its own shortly following World War II and was quickly adopted for Black by such aggressive players as David Bronstein, Svetozar Gligoric, Bobby Fischer and, later, Garry Kasparov. In certain main lines (especially the often played Classical Variation), White attacks on the Queenside and Black counters on the Kingside. Anything can happen.

During the years from 1975 to 1985, when Anatoly Karpov was world champion of the International Chess Federation, the King's Indian fell out of favor as the chess world came under the influence of Karpov's conservative style. But these days, since the ascension of Kasparov, the King's Indian is once again seen at the highest level of play.

Here is a Classical Variation slugfest in which both sides try to land a knockout blow—but without success. "This draw," wrote five-time U.S. champion Larry Evans, "has the charm of perfection. The timing and ingenuity displayed by both players produce a harmonious flow of movement, remarkable in its aesthetic appeal."

Svetozar Gligoric – Robert Fischer
Bled, 1961

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE

1.	**d4**	**Nf6**
2.	**c4**	**g6**
3.	**Nc3**	**Bg7**
4.	**e4**	**d6**
5.	**Nf3**	**0-0**
6.	**Be2**	**e5**

7. 0-0 Nc6

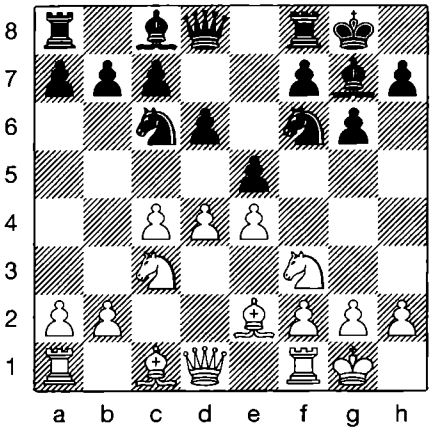


DIAGRAM 227

8. d5

When White tries to eliminate a lot of the risk in the position, he plays 8. Be3 Re8 (played by Fischer at Monaco, 1967) 9. dxe5 dxe5 10. Qxd8, with an equal position.

8. ... Ne7

9. Ne1 Nd7

10. Nd3!

For many years, White played 10. f3 f5 11. Be3 f4 12. Bf2 g5, but Black gets such a strong attack in this continuation that 10. f3 has almost sunk to the level of a mini-trap to be avoided.

10. ... f5

Black is opening up his Kingside while simultaneously starting an attack.

11. exf5

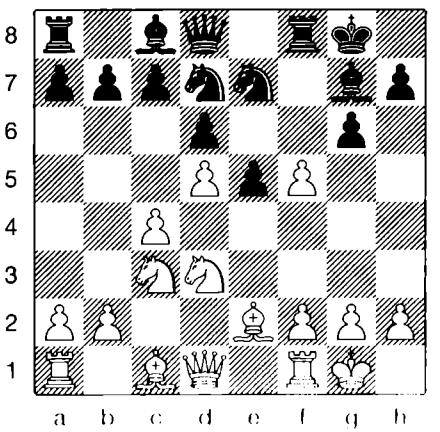


DIAGRAM 228

11. ... Nxf5

Black's recapture is today regarded as a trifle dated—if not incorrect. Instead, Black keeps control of e4 and keeps White's Knights off that key square with 11. ... gxf5 12. f4 Ng6.

12.	**f3**	**Nf6**
13.	**Nf2**	**Nd4**
14.	**Nfe4**	**Nh5**
15.	**Bg5**	**Qd7**
16.	**g3**	**h6**
17.	**Be3**	

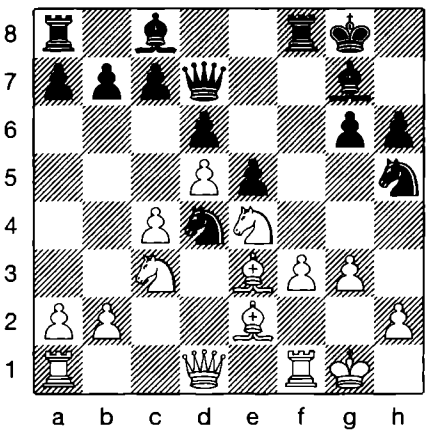


DIAGRAM 229

17.	**...**	**c5!**

Fischer avoided 17. ... Nxe2+ because of 18. Qxe2 g5 19. c5, when White's Queenside attack is further advanced than Black's counterattack on the Kingside.

18.	**Bxd4**	**exd4**

19. Nb5 a6

20. Nbxd6

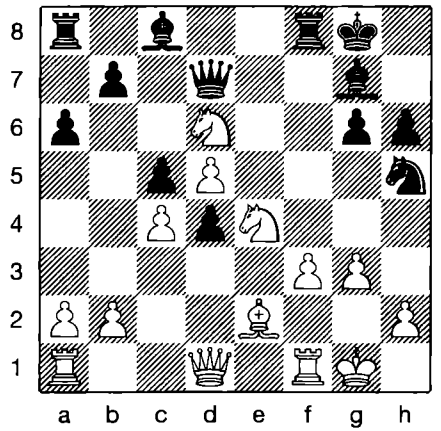


DIAGRAM 230

20. ... d3!

Black is down a pawn—apparently for nothing. He now offers a second pawn to open the long diagonal for his King Bishop—a necessity if he is to find adequate chances for a counterattack against White's King.

21. Qxd3 Bd4+

22. Kg2

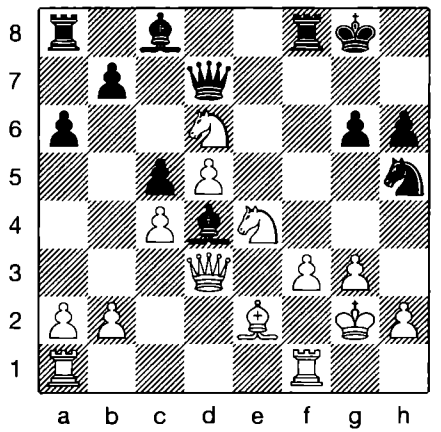


DIAGRAM 231

22. ... Nxg3!

Writes Evans, "Black had to visualize this resource and determine its absolute soundness when he embarked on his combination on move 17."

23. Nxc8

Of course, 23. hxg3 and 23. Kxg3 are refuted by 23. ... Qh3 mate. Although

23. Nxg3 Qxd6 leaves White ahead by a pawn, Black still has a dan Kingside attack as compensation.

23.	**...**	**Nxf1**
24.	**Nb6**	**Qc7**
25.	**Rxf1**	**Qxb6**
26.	**b4!**	**Qxb4**
27.	**Rb1**	**Qa5**

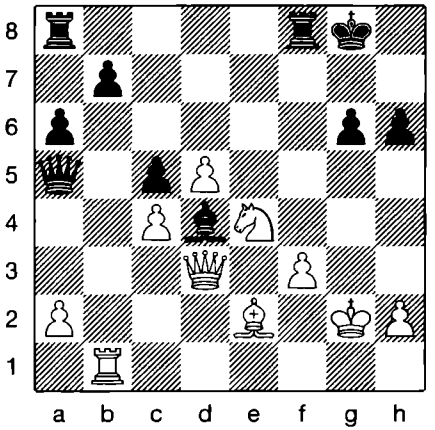


DIAGRAM 232

28.	**Nxc5**	**Qxc5**
29.	**Qxg6+**	**Bg7**
30.	**Rxb7**	**Qd4**
31.	**Bd3**	**Rf4**
32.	**Qe6+**	**Kh8**
33.	**Qg6**	**draw**

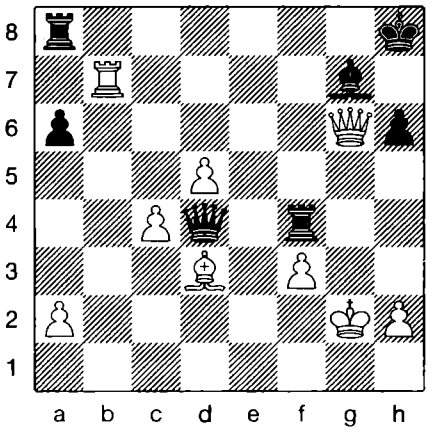


DIAGRAM 233

THE MODERN BENONI

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. Nc3 exd5 5. cxd5 d6

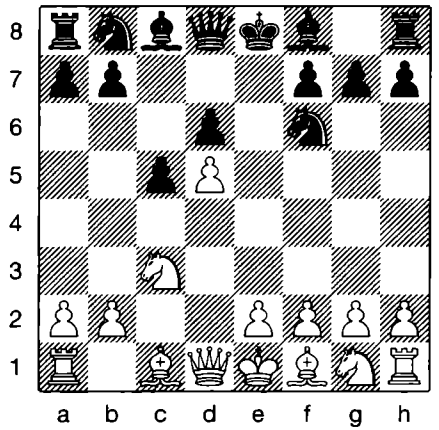


DIAGRAM 234

In the 1950s, future world titleholder Mikhail Tal turned the Benoni Defense into a dangerous attacking weapon for Black. His treatment of the Modern Benoni showed that Black could make use of his Queenside pawn majority with aggressive pawn breaks on b5 and use both his Bishop on g7 and half-open e-file for attacking purposes.

White, on the other hand, frequently winds up with pawns on d5, e4 and f4; he will try to play e4-e5 at the right moment, attacking the pawn on d6, which is the foundation of Black's position. White wins these games when his far-advanced pawns turn out to be strong and cramp Black's game; he loses these games when his position becomes top heavy and collapses like a house of cards. Here is an example of how Black makes use of his attacking opportunities when White overextends himself.

Bukhuti Gurgenidze – Mikhail Tal
Soviet Championship, 1961

THE MODERN BENONI

1.	**d4**	**Nf6**
2.	**c4**	**c5**
3.	**d5**	**e6**
4.	**Nc3**	**exd5**
5.	**cxd5**	**d6**
6.	**Nf3**	**g6**
7.	**e4**	**Bg7**
8.	**Be2**	**0-0**

9. 0-0 Re8

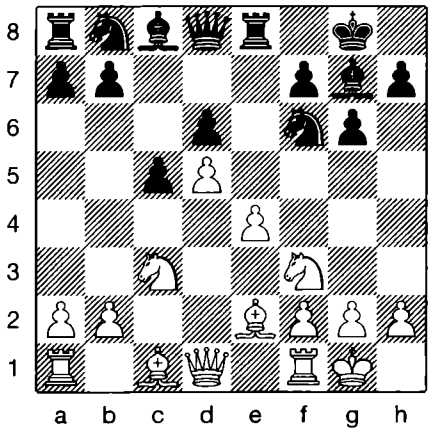


DIAGRAM 235

10. Nd2

White has set up his center, and Black has done all that he should except to mobilize his Queenside pawns.

10. ... Na6

11. Re1 Nc7

12. a4

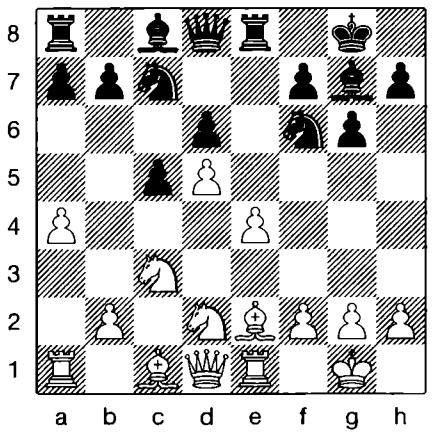


DIAGRAM 236

Black was not yet threatening to play ... b7-b5, and the move a2-a4 should be avoided until that moment. The move has little point if Black tries another plan on the Queenside.

12. ... b6

13. Qc2 Ng4

14. h3?

White is just asking for it by weakening the dark squares around his King and making his h3-pawn a potential target.

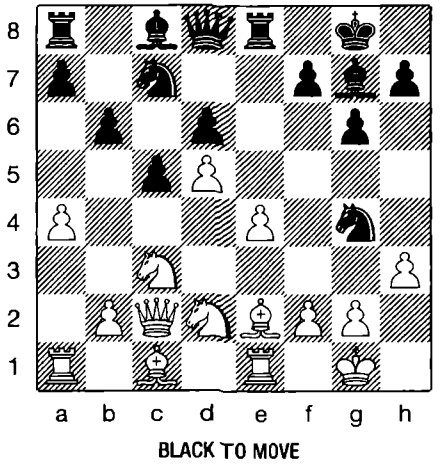


DIAGRAM 237

BLACK TO MOVE

14.	**...**	**Nxf2!**
15.	**Kxf2**	**Qh4+**
16.	**Kf1**	**Bd4**
17.	**Nd1**	

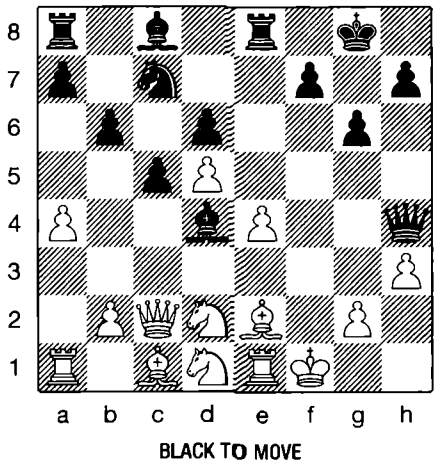


DIAGRAM 238

BLACK TO MOVE

17.	**...**	**Qxh3!**

The point behind this Queen offer is 18. gxh3 Bxh3 mate—an example of the two Bishops mate that we covered in Book 1 of this series!

18.	**Bf3**	**Qh2**
19.	**Ne3**	**f5**
20.	**Ndc4**	**fxe4**

21. **Bxc4** **Ba6**
22. **Bf3** **Re5**
23. **Ra3** **Rae8**

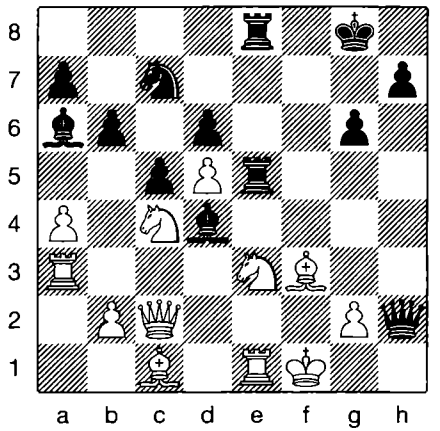


DIAGRAM 239

24. **Bd2** **Nxd5**

Black knocks down the house of cards with this capture.

25. **Bxd5+** **Rxd5**
26. **Ke2** **Bxe3**

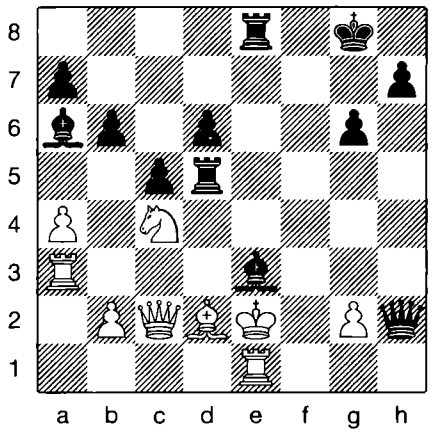


DIAGRAM 240

27. **Rxe3** **Bxc4+**

White resigns

After 28. Qxc4, there is mate by 28. ... Qxg2+ 29. Kd1 Qxd2.

THE DUTCH DEFENSE

1. d4 f5

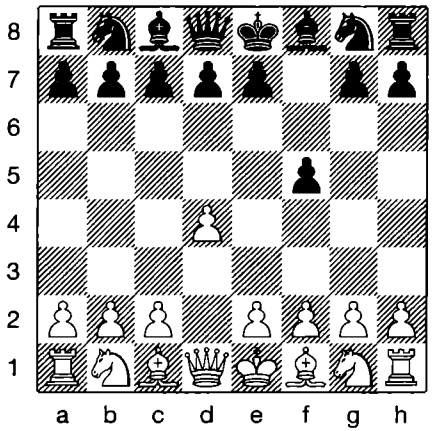


DIAGRAM 241

Playing the Dutch Defense is a great way to win and lose some short games (see our Denker-Feit chess movie on page 192). To play it successfully as Black, you must know it cold because White has several very strong gambit lines that have been analyzed virtually to wins if Black makes even a single bad move. A White player who is booked up in one of these gambits can pose a danger to even a much stronger adversary who is not fully informed. The Staunton Gambit (1. d4 f5 2. e4 fxe4 3. Nc3) is the best known of the anti-Dutch attacking ideas. The traditional weak point for Black is a pawn on e6 that can become subject to attack if the pawn on d7 is moved without good reason.

But when the Dutch Defense works, Black can often launch strong Kingside attacks.

QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENSE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 (White avoids the Nimzo-Indian Defense by developing his King Knight first) 3. ... b6

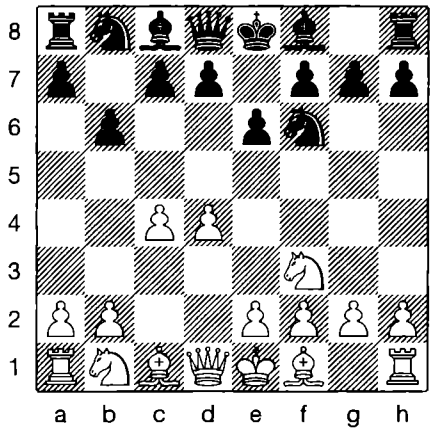


DIAGRAM 242

The Queen's Indian combines a fianchettoed Bishop on b7 with a Knight on f6—both hitting e4. If Black can prevent White from getting control over e4 early in the game, then he will later have excellent chances to draw or even win the game.

If the King's Indian is often a counterattacking defense involving ... f7-f5 with the idea of storming the White King, then the Queen's Indian can be less stressful—a prophylactic defense designed against overweening central control by White through controlling e4. Players of a quieter disposition can build an opening repertoire around the Queen's Indian Defense (when White plays 3. Nf3) and the Nimzo-Indian Defense (when White plays 3. Nc3).

10 Queen Pawn Chess Movies

IN THE 1920S BELGIAN MASTER Edgar Colle (1897–1932) developed a system of attack for White involving 1. d4, 2. Nf3, 3. e3, 4. Nbd2, 5. c3, 6. Bd3, followed by a timely e3-e4, liberating the Queen Bishop and often aiming for an attack against Black's King. Bishop sacrifices on h7 are common in what became known as the Colle System.

UNEASY LIES THE HEAD

"Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown" was never more apt than when Colle directed the White pieces against the Black King, as in this game versus Victor Soultanbeieff (Liege, 1930). The curtain goes up with 1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. e3 d5 4. Nbd2 c5.

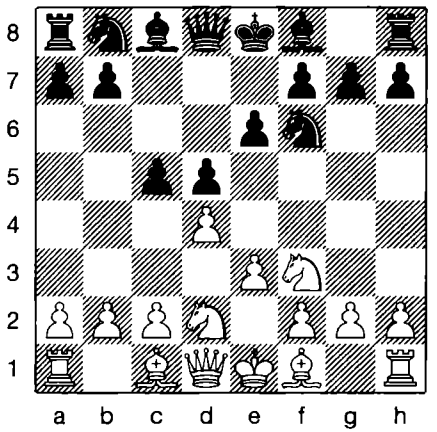


DIAGRAM 243

1. Black's fourth move is a popular method of defending against the Colle System, the idea being to play ... cxd4 after White has played e3-e4, thereby leaving White with an isolated d-pawn. The next moves are 5. c3 Nc6 6. Bd3 cxd4. Black's capture is premature. A better move is 6. ... Be7.

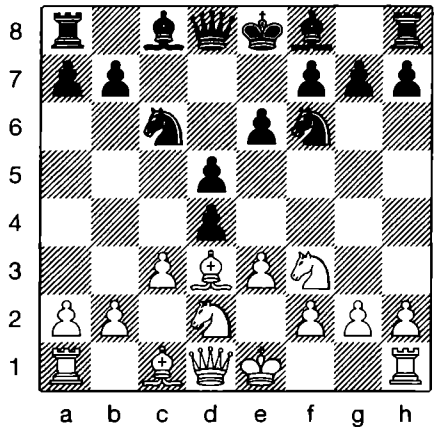


DIAGRAM 244

2. With 7. exd4, White prepares to mobilize his pieces. With the e3-pawn no longer in the way, his Queen Bishop will be able to gain freedom, and he can post his Queen and Rook along the e-file. The c-pawn provides sufficient protection for his strong d-pawn. Both sides continue developing with 7. ... Bd6 8. 0-0 Qc7 9. Re1 0-0. White is obviously aiming his pieces at the opponent's King, and Black is trying to defend solidly.

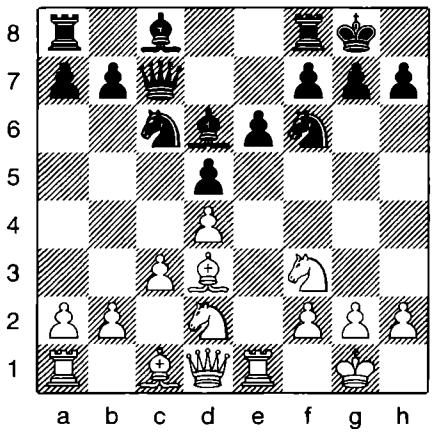


DIAGRAM 245

3. After 10. Qe2 Re8, Black is planning to continue with the freeing 11. ... e5. But White says "Nyet!" on his next move.

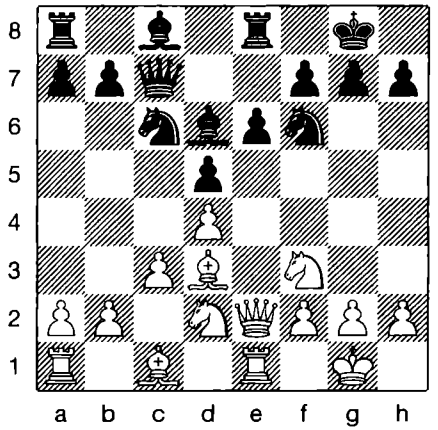


DIAGRAM 246

4. In chess, good timing is never outdated. White chooses the right moment to sink a Knight into the center with 11. Ne5, thereby preventing 11. ... e5 and discouraging 11. ... Nd7, which lets White launch a winning attack with 12. Bxh7+ Kxh7 13. Qh5+ Kg8 14. Qxf7+. Black bolsters f7 with 11. ... Re7, still planning on ... Nd7.

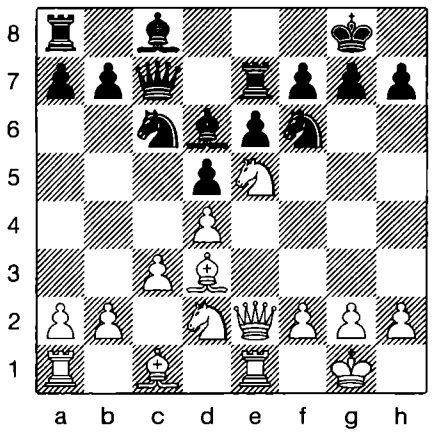


DIAGRAM 247

5. White uncovers his Queen Bishop and bolsters his Knight on e5 with 12. Ndf3, and Black continues with his plan, 12. ... Nd7. The clash between White's faith in the attack and Black's belief in the defense is dramatic, with the second player having the more difficult practical problems.

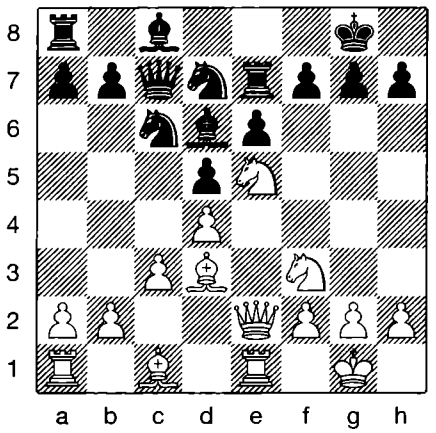


DIAGRAM 248

6. Both masters follow their visions of the truth by 13. Ng5 Nf8. Is White rushing in prematurely, or is Black getting overrun? An example of the accuracy required of Black is 13. ... h6? 14. Ngxf7 Rxf7 15. Nxf7 Kxf7 16. Qxe6+ with mate on the next move. Yet, with the Knight at f8, Black's King wall looks solid.

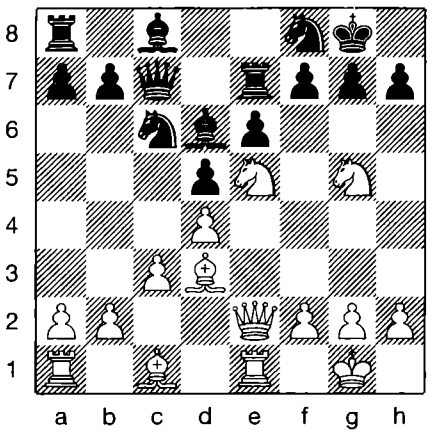


DIAGRAM 249

7. But is it? White begins to knock down the wall with 14. Nxh7, a brilliant sacrifice that is best answered by 14. ... Bxe5 15. dxe5 Qxe5 16. Qxe5 Nxe5 17. Rxe5 Nxh7, when Black stands slightly worse in what is probably a drawn ending. The virtue of this defense is its strength and simplicity.

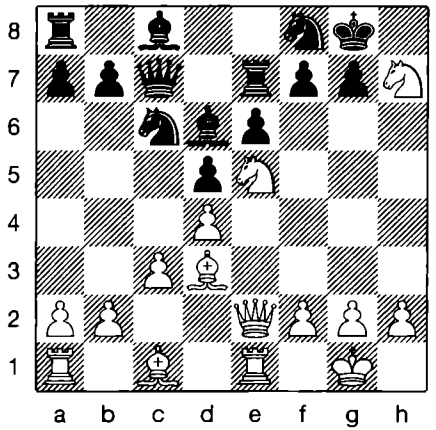


DIAGRAM 250

8. Instead, Black tries to refute the sacrifice by 14. ... Nxh7 15. Bxh7+ Kxh7 16. Qh5+ Kg8. White is down a piece, but is he up a King? The position appears to be in negative balance: White has no immediately decisive threats, and Black has no way to mobilize his material plus.

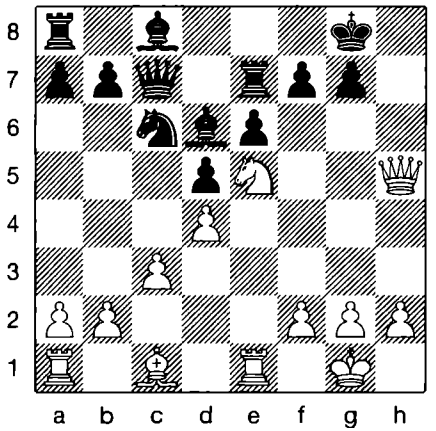


DIAGRAM 251

9. White calmly continues the attack with 17. Re3, which threatens the simian 18. Rh3 and 19. Qh8 mate. But the real significance of the Rook lift is that Black must find a defense among a myriad of possibilities. He selects 17. ... Re8 but might have done better with 17. ... f6.

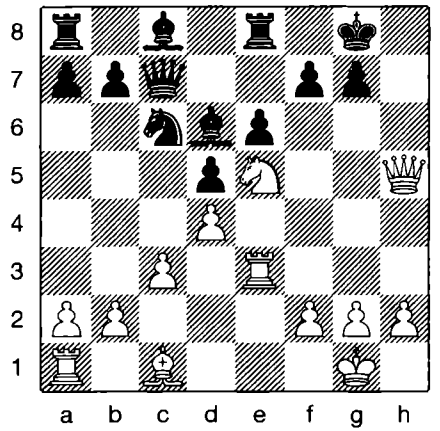


DIAGRAM 252

10. After 18. Rh3 Kf8, White plays 19. Bg5, blocking the escape route of Black's King. Something must be done about the terrible threat of 20. Qh8 mate. The bad news for Black is that not much can be done. Although it seems unfair that Black, who is a piece up and has made no obviously bad moves, is losing, the brutal fact of chess life is that victory belongs to the player who can bring the most force to bear where the action is.

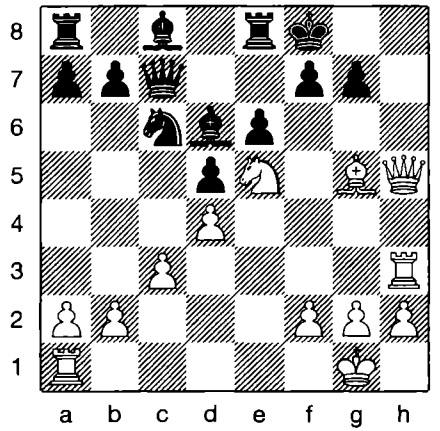


DIAGRAM 253

11. The only defense is 19. ... f6, freeing up both the e7 and f7 squares. But unlike White who displayed perfect timing in the attack, Black played ... f7-f6 two moves too late. White has wheeled forward two additional attacking units—the Rook and Bishop—which means...

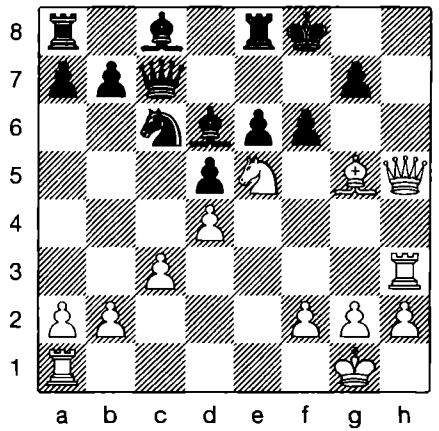


DIAGRAM 254

12. ... Black resigns after 20. Bxf6, one of those little sacrificial tricks that always seem to be present when the stronger side has pieces crawling all over the opponent's King. On 20. ... gxf6, there follows 21. Ng6+ Kg8 22. Qh8+ Kf7 23. Qh7 mate. A typical Colle short story. As an easy-to-learn attacking weapon for White, we recommend the Colle System highly.

ABSOLUTE PURITY AND CHARM

When asked to show his favorite game, GM Arnold Denker, U.S. champion from 1944 to 1946 and noted tactician, always selects this Dutch Defense in which he was White against Harold Feit. None of his other games, he has written, can compare with this one "for absolute purity and charm." The venue: New York Interscholastics, 1929. The contest begins with 1. d4 f5 2. Nf3 e6 3. g3 b6.

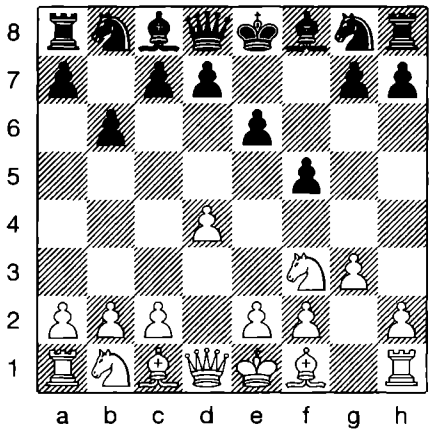


DIAGRAM 255

1. Play continues 4. Bg2 Bb7 5. 0-0 Nf6 6. c4 Be7 7. Nc3 d6. White's strategy will be to bottle up Black's Queen Bishop with a timely d4-d5 and to aim a Knight at the e6-square. Logical—and what Denker has called a "minor miracle" of reasoning because he had never seen the Dutch Defense before!

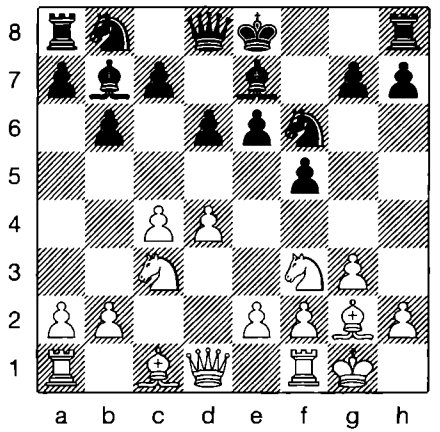


DIAGRAM 256

2. The next two moves are 8. d5 e5 9. Ng5 Bc8. White executes the plan to occupy d5 and attack e6. Black must retreat his fianchettoed Bishop to stop Ne6 and Nxg7+. This game has a wonderful positional flow, and Denker's grand combination features numerous tactical themes.

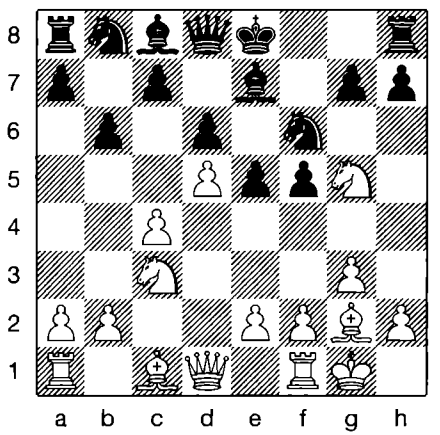


DIAGRAM 257

3. White opens lines by 10. e4!, a good idea because of Black's poor development. If 10. ... h6, White has 11. Ne6 Bxe6 12. dxe6 fxe4 13. Nxe4, threatening 14. Nxf6+ and 15. Qh5+, with mate in the offing. Black defends by 10. ... 0-0, and White thrusts forward another pawn with 11. f4.

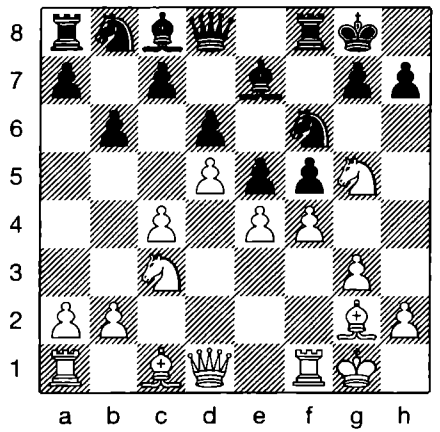


DIAGRAM 258

4. Black liquidates pawns in the center, a decision that opens up the position for White's better developed forces. The moves are 11. ... exf4 12. Bxf4 fxe4 13. Ncxe4 Nxe4. The second player is temporarily up a piece and expected 14. Nxe4, when he may have a playable game. But ...

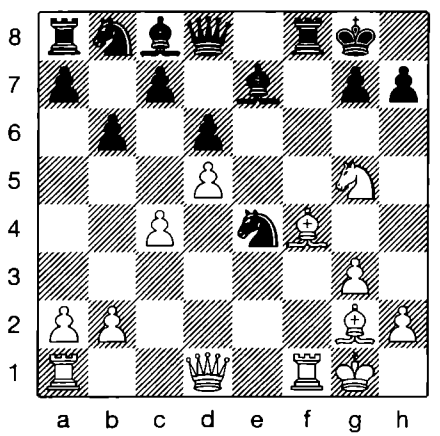


DIAGRAM 259

5. ... the sacrifices begin with 14. Bxe4. If 14. ... h6, then 15. Qh5, intending 16. Qg6 and 17. Qh7+. On 14. ... g6, White plays 15. Nxh7 Kxh7 16. Qh5+, forcing mate. Black takes the dangerous Knight with 14. ... Bxg5, and White sweeps his Queen forward with 15. Qh5.

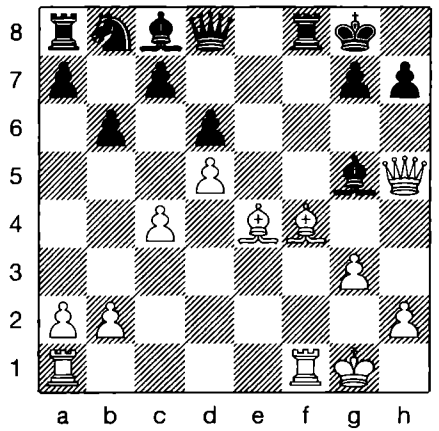


DIAGRAM 260

6. Black's Queenside forces are buried deeply in the left corner pocket, while White has a Queen and two Bishops trained against the King. Black grabs his best chance with 15. ... Rxf4 (a dreary alternative is 15. ... Bh6 16. Bxh6 gxh6 17. Qxh6 Rxf1+ 18. Rxf1 Qe7 19. Rf8+) 16. Qxh7+ Kf7 17. Bg6+ Kf6.

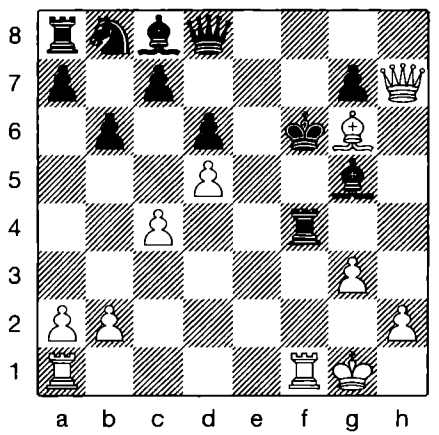


DIAGRAM 261

7. White is two pieces in deficit, though another way to think about the position is that Black is down his four useless Queenside pieces. Denker finds a filigree-like attacking thread, 18. Rxf4+ Bxf4 19. Qh4+, but he appears to be running out of pieces for hunting the Black King.

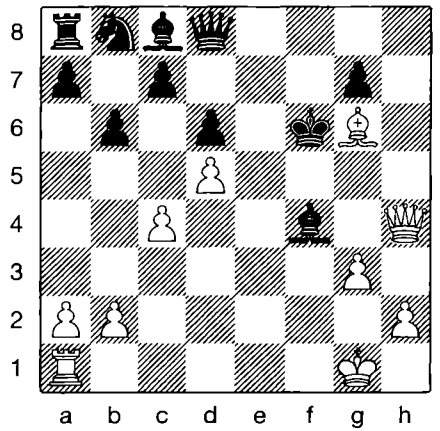


DIAGRAM 262

8. Black relieves the check with 19. ... Bg5 and may have been wondering whether White forgot that after 20. Rf1+, he can play 20. ... Kxg6. But the beautiful quiet move, 20. Qe4!, disabuses him. The threat is 21. Rf1+, with mate in the wings. Black must perish despite his material riches.

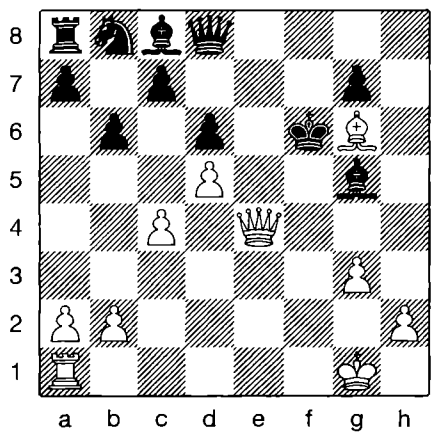


DIAGRAM 263

9. The second player makes the old college try by 20. ... Be3+, hoping for 21. Qxe3 Kxg6. White daintily sidesteps the check with 21. Kh1. The Bishop check does open the g5-square for Black's King, and it is unclear how White can force a checkmate.

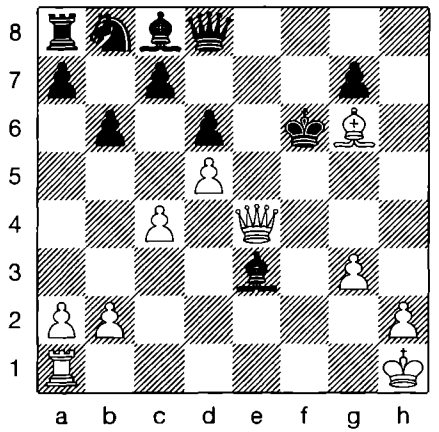


DIAGRAM 264

10. White still threatens discombobulation with Rf1+, and Black guards against it by 21. ... Bh3, which keeps the checking square under surveillance. But no matter, never mind—as was said of the philosophical dispute between Bishop Berkeley and David Hume. White plays 22. Rf1+ anyway.

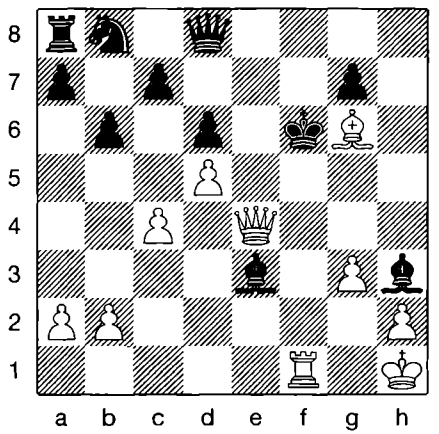


DIAGRAM 265

11. Denker's lovely point is that 22. ... Bxf1 is answered by 23. Qf5+ Ke7 24. Qf7 mate. So, 22. ... Kg5 is forced. The formal material balance is in Black's favor to the weight of a Bishop and Knight. But informally, Black is in arrears the three useless pieces loitering on his back rank.

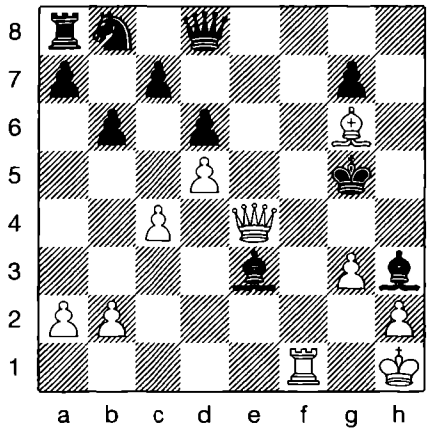


DIAGRAM 266

12. Now comes 23. Bh7!!, vacating the g6 square. Black resigns because there is no defense against either Qg6 mate or Qh4 mate. Quiet little moves such as 23. Bh7!!—which involve neither a check nor a capture—are often the most difficult to foresee.

11 Common Chess Endgame Themes

FOR MANY PLAYERS, STUDYING THE ENDGAME is a last and least proposition. Such torture ought not to be.

Most young chess students fall in love with intricate and beautiful middlegame combinations and spend hours analyzing specific positions. They love to solve tactical puzzles that provide both a challenge and the satisfaction of finding the right answers.

As for the openings, books on this part of chess are more popular and numerous than on any other subject within the game. Yet chess openings are far from settled, and many players will spend weeks studying a specific book and then find much of their work out of date a year or so later.

The same problem does not exist in the realm of endgame knowledge. The final word is known about many different kinds of endgames, and you can study this material with a reasonable expectation that it will not become dated. Once you know the mechanics of, say, an ending involving King, Rook and three pawns (f-, g- and h-pawns) versus King, Rook and two pawns (g- and h-pawns) on the same side of the board (considered a draw in normal positions), you do not have to worry about new discoveries. Once you see how to obtain a draw, then you can use the technique without fear of a recent development causing defeat.

Yet although many games last into endings, few of us can bring ourselves to learn the basics of endgame play. Which is another important reason to study endgames: If you master basic knowledge of the endings, you are likely to enjoy a significant edge over other players, who will study openings and middlegames but not endings.

Entire books, indeed, series of books, have been written about the endgame. In this chapter we dissect several endings that occur often.

KING AND PAWN VERSUS KING

You will often reach endings involving King and pawn versus King. Some of these endings are won, others drawn. It may be the single most common and easily studied position on the chessboard; it may also be the sin-

gle most commonly misplayed endgame. Players with the extra pawn only draw when they should win; players fighting to draw wind up losing when they could have split the point with a single good move.

There are masters who do not know this ending nearly as well as they should. They can solve effortlessly some of the toughest middlegame positions, but give them a small problem that requires knowledge of the patterns of a King-and-pawn ending, and they may spend 10 or 20 minutes before coming up with the correct (or incorrect) answer.

The nice thing about King and pawn versus King endings is that they almost always boil down to one of three basic positions. We have only one exception: What we say in this section applies to King and non-Rook pawn versus King. King and Rook pawn versus King is always a draw if the weaker side does no more than keep his King in front of the Rook pawn and retreat to the intended Queening square. There is absolutely no way of driving out the lone King, and the game will end as a draw by stalemate or three-fold repetition of position.

POSITION I

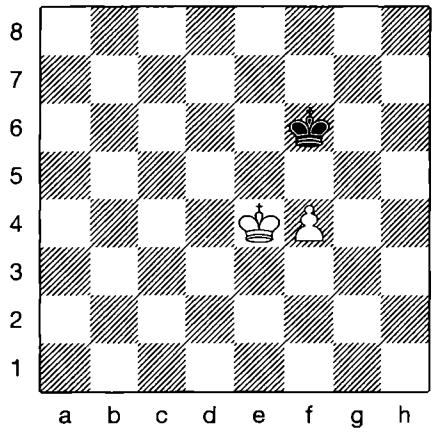


DIAGRAM 267

DRAW, REGARDLESS OF WHO IS TO MOVE

The defining characteristic of the above position is that the White King cannot place itself in front of its own pawn at e5, f5 or g5. With proper play by Black, the game is a draw no matter which side is to move. Here is the best that White can do:

1. f5 Kf7

Equally good is 1. ... Ke7.

2. Ke5 Ke7

3. **f6+** **Kf7**
4. **Kf5**

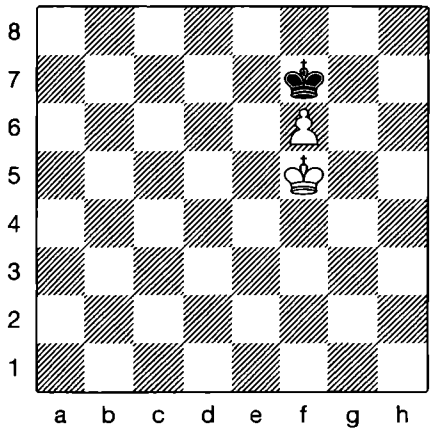


DIAGRAM 268

4. **...** **Kf8!**

The only move that leave's Black's King in a position to stall White's progress.

5. **Ke6** **Ke8**

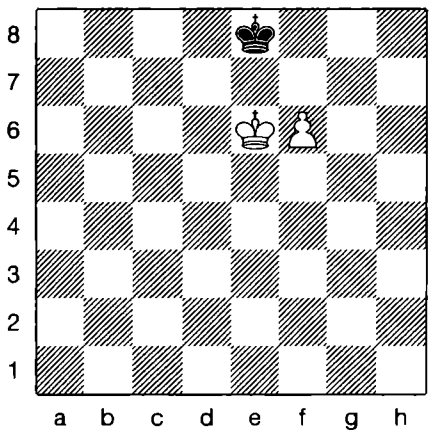


DIAGRAM 269

6. **f7+**

As a rule of thumb, the game is always a draw if White's pawn moves to the seventh rank with check.

6. **...** **Kf8**
7. **Kf6 stalemate**

From Diagram 267, with Black to move, the draw is easily had by 1. ... Ke6 2. f5+ Kf6 3. Kf4, and we are in the same basic position as in the main line

The second basic position occurs when a King is in front of its pawn.

POSITION II

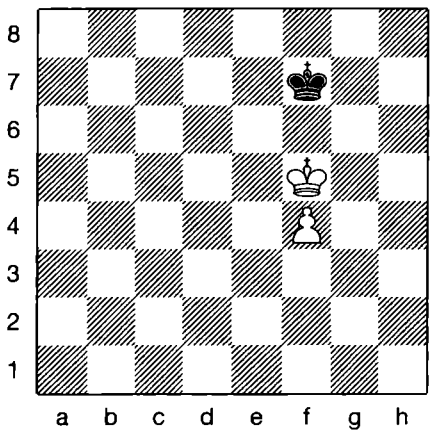


DIAGRAM 270

WHITE TO MOVE: DRAW
BLACK TO MOVE: WHITE WINS

This position illustrates a key concept called the ***opposition.***

"The opposition?" Among chessplayers, if you say those words, you see small streaks of fear dart across their faces and their eyes glaze over.

Now, the phrase, "the opposition," ought not to be scary. It simply describes a situation where a King can prevent its counterpart from advancing by moving directly in front of it. The player who is not on move is commonly said to have the opposition. Why? Because if White is to move in Diagram 270 with, say, 1. Ke5, then Black can respond by moving directly in front of the King by 1. ... Ke7; if White tries 1. Kg5, Black responds by opposing the King directly by 1. ... Kg7. On the other hand, if Black is to move, then 1. ... Ke7 meets with 2. Kg6 and 1. ... Kg7 allows 2. Ke6. In both instances, the opposition breaks down, and White wins. For example: 1. ... Kg7 2. Ke6 Kf8 (if 2. ... Kg8, then 3. Ke7 Kg7 4. f5) 3. Kf6 Ke8 4. Kg7 and 5. f5, and the pawn makes a Queen because White controls the promotion square.

From Diagram 270, play could proceed with:

1.	**Ke5**	**Ke7**
2.	**f5**	**Kf7**
3.	**f6**	**Kf8**
4.	**Ke6**	**Ke8**

That's right: Black continues to oppose the White King by moving in front of it.

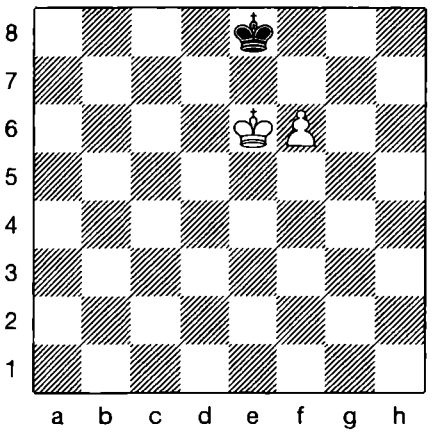


DIAGRAM 271

WHITE TO MOVE: DRAW
BLACK TO MOVE: WHITE WINS

From this position, White can only draw after 5. f7+ Kf8 6. Kf6, stalemate. But if Black is to move, he has to play 1. ... Kf8, when 2. f7 forces the King to g7, and White takes control of the Queening square and forces a coronation of the pawn after 3. Ke7.

Position III, given below, can arise from play that proceeds from Diagram 270 (with Black to move). Eventually, you may reach a position in which Black still has the opposition, but White will win regardless of who is to move.

POSITION III

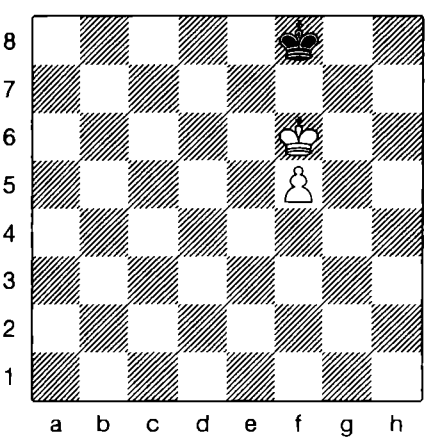


DIAGRAM 272

WHITE WINS REGARDLESS OF WHO IS TO MOVE

King stands on the sixth rank in front of his pawn (or third rank when it is Black who has the pawn). It makes no difference on which square the opposing King sits. There are no exceptions to this rule except, of course, in the case of Rook pawns.

If Black moves to e8, White's King goes to g7; if Black moves to g8, White's King goes to e7. In either case, White now controls the Queening square f8, and Black is helpless to prevent the White pawn's advance.

With White to move, the win is just as simple:

1. Kg6

Obviously, 1. Ke6 is equally good.

1. ... Kg8

Remember that, on 1. ... Ke8, White grabs f8 with 2. Kg7.

2. f6

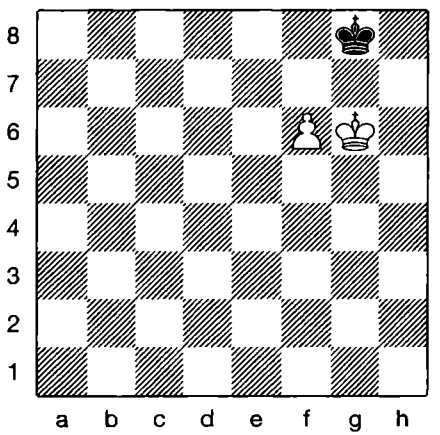


DIAGRAM 273

2. ... Kf8

Black can play for the cheap trap 2. ... Kh8, hoping for 3. f7 stalemate. But White simply plays 3. Kf7, 4. Ke7, 5. f7 and so on.

3. f7 Ke7

4. Kg7

And the White pawn will become a Queen on the next move.

KING IN FRONT OF THE PAWN

Given what you know about King and pawn endings, does White have a clear way to Queen his g-pawn in the following position?

POSITION IV

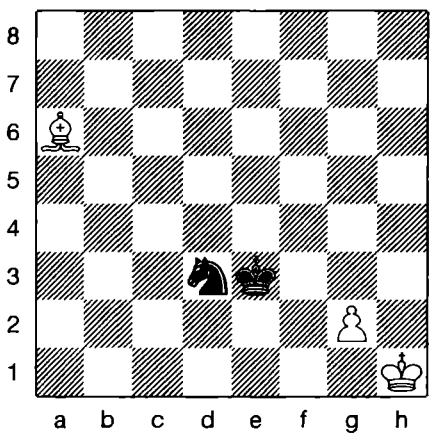


DIAGRAM 274

WHITE TO MOVE

The answer is a fairly obvious yes. Why? Because White need merely play 1. Bxd3 Kxd3 (Black has to grab the piece if he is to retain any hope of drawing the game) 2. Kh2 Ke4 3. Kg3. Notice, White once again has placed his King in front of his extra pawn and will eventually be able to force a Queen with correct play on his part, using the principles we discussed in Positions II and III.

Relative beginners in chess often see a master play a move like 1. Bxd3 without apparent thought and wonder how he could figure out the further course of the game to a sure win. In reality, the master has not made a major calculation of moves in a split second. He merely knows that if he can place his King on the square in front of his pawn, then he can eventually win with correct play by preventing Black from taking the opposition and that 1. Bxd3 allows him to do this.

THE OUTSIDE PASSED PAWN

In King and pawn endings, the most common theme may be winning with the "outside passed pawn." Here is a representative King and pawn ending that every player will experience hundreds of times in competitive chess:

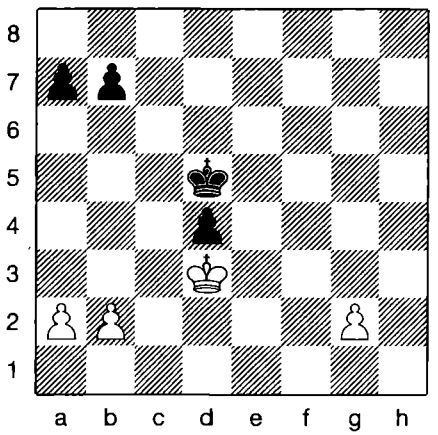


DIAGRAM 275

WHITE OR BLACK TO MOVE: WHITE WINS

Material is even. Both sides have a King and three pawns, and at first glance, it even appears as if Black has an advantage because his forces are further advanced. But in truth, White can win this position very easily because of the outside passed pawn (his g-pawn). For our purposes, a ***passed pawn*** is one that can advance to promotion because no enemy pawns can block it or guard squares in its path from immediately adjacent files; an ***outside passed pawn*** is the passed pawn furthest from the main fighting area or from the two Kings and is often used as a decoy.

Let's reason our way through the position in Diagram 275. We already know from Book 1 that a major goal in endgames is to advance a pawn to the eighth rank and promote it to a Queen or some other piece (except a King). Thus, White pushes his g-pawn forward, just as Black wishes to push his d-pawn. The difference is that White has the outside pawn, which is furthest away from the other pawns.

Black must therefore desert his d-pawn and the Queenside to pursue the g-pawn. In the meantime, White's King can capture the d-pawn, then the remaining Queenside pawns, and win easily by Queening one or both of his two connected passed pawns on the a- and b-files.

The win is simple:

1.	g4	Ke5
2.	g5	Kf5

3. **Kxd4** **Kxg5**

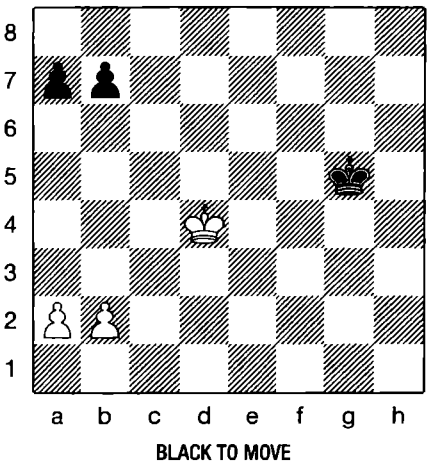


DIAGRAM 276

BLACK TO MOVE

Black's King is far removed from the action on the Queenside because it had to pursue the outside passed g-pawn. It is obvious that White can now pick off Black's two pawns and then make a Queen or two with his remaining pawns. Play might continue:

4. **Ke5** **Kg4**
5. **Kd6** **Kf3**
6. **Kc7**

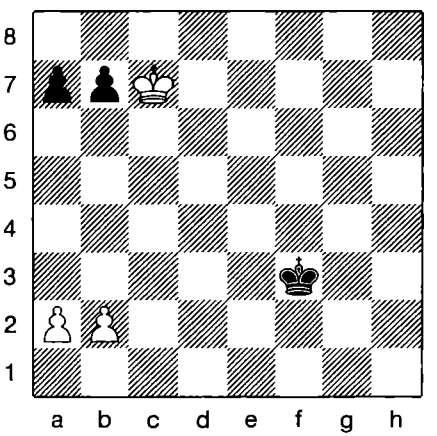


DIAGRAM 277

6. **...** **Ke2**
7. **Kxb7** **Kd2**
8. **Kxa7** **Kc2**
9. **b4**

And White will soon make a Queen.

PROTECTED PASSED PAWNS

In many games, one of the great equalizers in King and pawn endings is the ability to create a protected passed pawn—a passed pawn that is protected by a fellow pawn. In Diagram 278, White is down a pawn, but he can hold a draw because of his protected passed pawn on c6. If Black plays 1. ... Kd6 and 2. ... Kc5 in an effort to capture the b5-pawn, then White promotes his pawn to a Queen after 3. c7. Thus, the Black King is tied down to c7 and its environs, and the game is a draw. The White King can, of course, restrain, but not win, Black's g- and h-pawns.

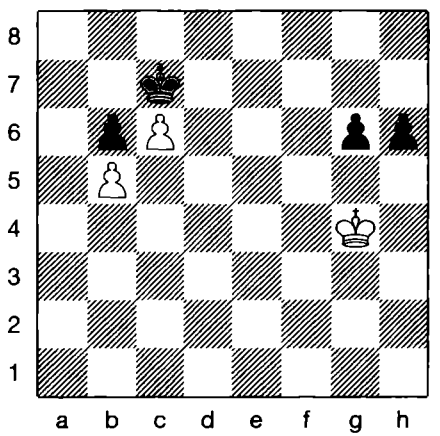


DIAGRAM 278

WHITE OR BLACK TO MOVE: DRAW

MUTUALLY PROTECTING PAWNS

Pawns that are a single file apart can array themselves so that the enemy King cannot capture one without permitting the other to Queen. In King and pawn endings, this mechanism of mutual protection can either save an apparently lost ending or win what looked like a drawn game.

Here is an example of mutually protecting pawns:

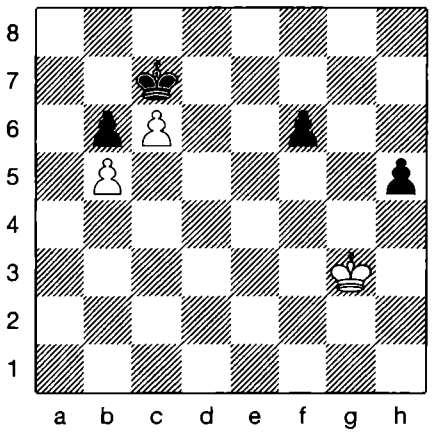


DIAGRAM 279

BLACK TO MOVE
AND PROTECT HIS PAWNS

This position appears easily won for White because of his protected passed pawn on c6. He need merely pick off Black's disconnected and unprotected f- and h-pawns and then march his King over to the Queenside to promote his b- or c-pawn. But Black can array his Kingside pawns to make them unassailable. The correct move is:

1. ... f5

2. Kg2

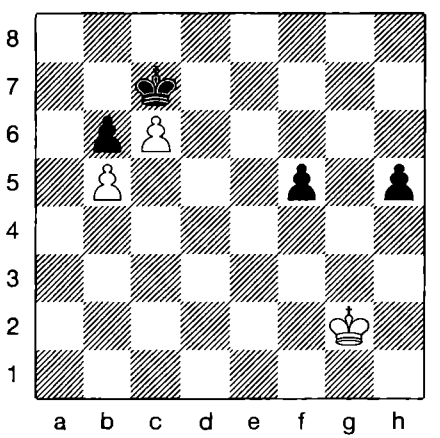


DIAGRAM 280

White can not approach either pawn with advantage: if 2. Kf4, then 2. ... h4 3. Kxf5?? h3, and Black even wins!

2. ... Kd6

Black must be careful not to continue advancing his pawns blindly. For example, White wins after 2. ... h4 3. Kh3 f4 4. Kxh4 f3 5. Kg3, when the King stops the pawn.

After 2. ... Kd6, Black can simply maintain the status quo by shuffling his King between d6 and c7 forever. The position is drawn if White can maintain the position of his King on g2, which is simple. After 2. ... Kd6, he has to play 3. Kg3 Kc7 4. Kg2, and so on, with a draw by repetition.

ROOK AND PAWN ENDGAMES

Because Rooks are often the last pieces to enter the battle, they are less often traded than Bishops, Knights and Queens, which often participate in the fighting at a very early stage. One result is that endgames involving Rooks and pawns on both sides are more common than endings featuring minor pieces or Queens.

A key principle in Rook and pawn endings: If you have a passed pawn or a pawn that you feel is likely to advance later toward a Queening square, place a Rook behind the pawn rather than in front or to the side. Here is a typical maneuver:

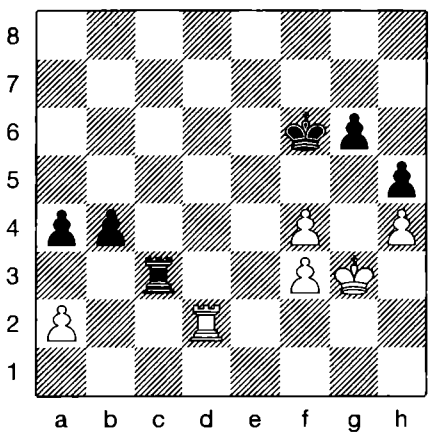


DIAGRAM 281

BLACK TO MOVE

1. ... **Rc6**
2. **Rb2**

White should consider the pawn sacrifice 2. f5, to stir up some counterplay on the Kingside. Even this idea probably won't allow White to draw, but after the passive 2. Rb2, he just gets squashed.

2. ... **Rb6**

3. Rb1 b3

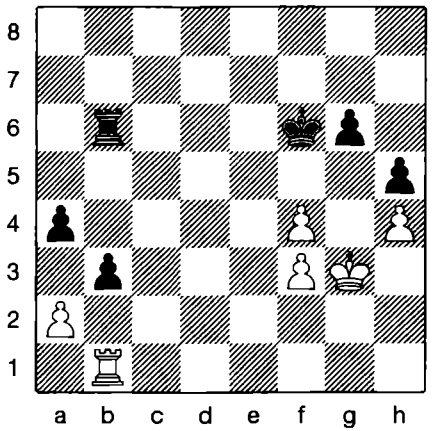


DIAGRAM 282

The threat is 4. ... bxa2, and if 5. Rxb6+, then the Rook can no longer stop the Black a-pawn from Queening after its checks run out.

4. axb3 axb3

5. Rb2 Rb4

6. Rb1 b2

The threat is now 7. ... Kf5. White's Rook must stay on b1 to prevent the pawn from Queening. Thus, the White King must move (*zugzwang*), and Black will soon wipe out White's weak Kingside pawns and then transfer his King to the Queenside for the coronation of the b-pawn.

DRAWN POSITIONS

Former world champion Vassily Smyslov, a great endgame player who had reached what appeared to be an easily won Rook and pawn endgame, was shocked when his opponent found an amazing way to hold a draw. "All Rook endings are drawn!" he exclaimed jocularly and, perhaps, a bit ruefully.

Well, of course, they're not all drawn. But it is in Rook and pawn endings that the weaker side often has numerous resources to offer prolonged resistance when down material.

In the following position, however, the weaker side does not have to resort to defensive heroics. It is one of many standard drawing positions that the stronger side cannot exploit for a win against reasonable defensive play:

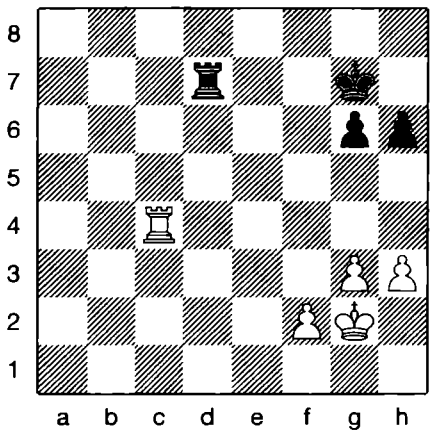


DIAGRAM 283

DRAWN POSITION

A general rule (with numerous specific exceptions) is that the fewer the pawns, the greater the drawing chances for the weaker side. Thus, in the above position, if White also has a pawn on e2 and Black a pawn on f7, making it four pawns versus three, then Black's defense is more difficult.

In the next position, Black should be able to hold the game quite easily by continuing checks along the files:

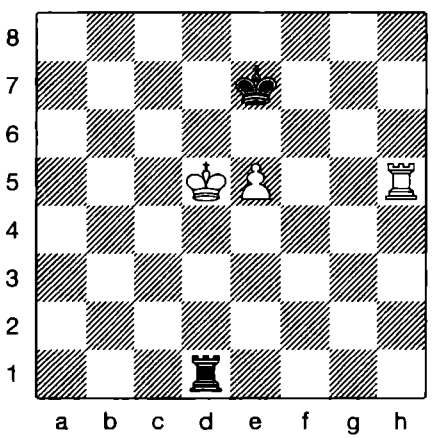


DIAGRAM 284

EASILY DRAWN POSITION

In endings with King, Rook and pawn versus King and Rook, the outcome depends on how close the King of the weaker side is to the pawn. If the King is correctly placed in front of the pawn, then the draw often

becomes almost a matter of the weaker side knowing when to begin a series of checks against the enemy King. Black draws by checking vertically because White cannot usefully escape the checks.

Now, let's take a look at "Philidor's position," a rather common position that was definitively analyzed by Andre Philidor, a French composer and the greatest player of the final half of the eighteenth century.

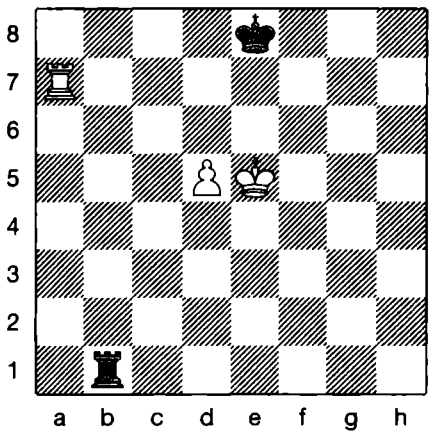


DIAGRAM 285

BLACK TO MOVE AND DRAW

1. ... Rb6!

Black waits for White to play d5-d6 (threatening Ke6 and Ra8 mate). After White plays d5-d6, Black must immediately play ... Rb1. From this safe distance, the Black Rook can endlessly check White's King along the first rank because the White King can no longer hide from checks by moving to d6.

BASIC ROOK AND PAWN POSITIONS

Rook and pawn endings often resolve themselves down to a neat and simple little tactical trick. Here is an example:

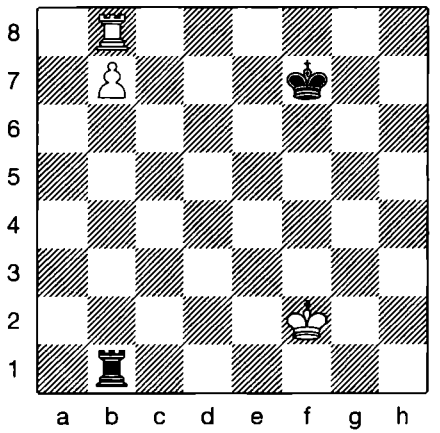


DIAGRAM 286

WHITE TO MOVE AND WIN

1. Rh8!

The only winning move. The threat is simply 2. b8=Q. If Black tries 1. ... Rxb7, then White wins with 2. Rh7+ Ke6 3. Rxb7, finishing up a Rook with a sure mate in the offing. Keep this trick in mind because it shows up in many Rook and pawn endgames. If Black is to move in Diagram 286, he draws easily by 1. ... Kg7, preventing White from exploiting the Rook check on h7. White can try to march his King to c6, where it will protect the pawn and allow the Rook at b8 to move off the Queening square. In that case, Black harasses the White King with checks along the first rank. When the King moves away from the pawn, Black plays his Rook back to b1, and White will be stalled.

A second important idea is called "building a bridge."

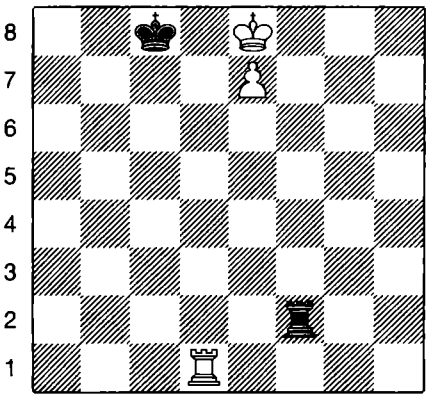


DIAGRAM 287

WHITE TO MOVE AND WIN

1. **Rc1+** **Kb7**

White checks so that the White King can vacate the Queening square of e8. But the question becomes: When the White King does emerge, how does it avoid endless Black checks by the Rook without moving the King far away from the pawn.

2. **Rc4!**

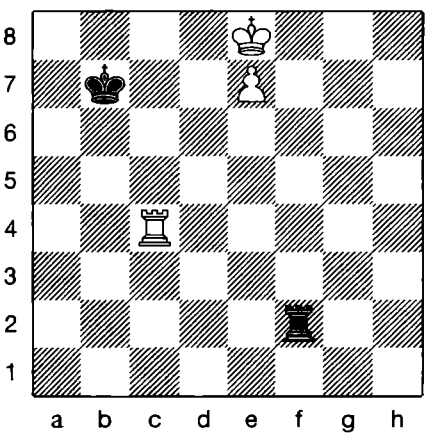


DIAGRAM 288

This bridge-building maneuver enables White to avoid endless checks along the files by Black's Rook once the White King comes out.

2. **...** **Rf3**

3. **Kd7** **Rd3+**

4. **Ke6** **Re3+**

5. **Kd6**

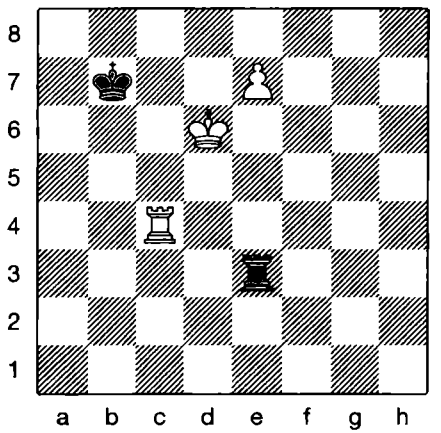


DIAGRAM 289

5. ... **Rd3+**

On 5. ... Kb6, White plays 6. Rc6+, when he is able to build his bridge after either 6. ... Kb5 7. Rc5+ and 8. Re5 or 6. ... Kb7 7. Rc5 (not 7. Kd7?? Rxe7+!) 7. ... Rd3+ 8. Ke6 Re3+ 9. Re5.

6. **Ke5** **Re3+**

7. **Re4, and White wins**

12 Practical Tournament Tips

DO YOU FEEL READY TO PLAY CHESS in officially organized tournaments? There are hundreds of events each month around the country, many of them organized or advertised by the U.S. Chess Federation (USCF). With over 80,000 dues-paying members, the USCF is not only the official American national chess body, it is also by several orders of magnitude the country's largest and most effective. Some official chess tournaments have large prizes of several thousand dollars for players who are just beginning the game.

In a tournament of 1,000 players, there may be 250 or so who are experienced and quite highly rated by the USCF. The remaining 750 are less accomplished and have varying degrees of experience, including dozens of unrated players new to the tournament scene. Prize funds are structured to reward players at all levels, including relative beginners. If you do well among your peers, then you can win a handsome prize within your division.

To join the USCF, which publishes *Chess Life*, a four-color monthly magazine and manages an official rating system with some 35,000 rated players, contact the organization at its toll-free number, 1–800–388–5464. In a few weeks you will receive a membership card. Bring it to tournaments and try your luck in official play against other beginners and the occasional master, against whom you can measure your progress as well as learn a great deal.

"I treasure my chances to play a master," one of GM Lev Alburt's students once remarked. "There is no pressure because no one expects me to win or even to offer much resistance. The result is that I often play my best game against masters, discovering in the process new ideas and tactics. I would gladly pay for private instruction from such fine players, but in tournaments, I get to play them for the price of my tiny entry fee."

TOURNAMENT ADVICE

People play in tournaments because the competition is fun. You meet friends who possess a similar passion for chess, discuss study habits, and play numerous casual games for practice. There are also chess bookstores with thousands of volumes on the royal game that are seldom available in mainline chain stores.

Dr. Martin Katahn, the famous author of such *New York Times* best-sellers as *The T-Factor Diet* and *The Tri-Color Diet* (Norton, 1996), began playing tournament chess recently at age 64. In an article in the August 1993 issue of *Chess Life* ("You're Never Too Old to Learn"), he offered several commonsense tips for doing well in tournament play. Our thanks for his allowing us to quote the advice.

First, get yourself oriented, Katahn advises. "Most USCF tournament directors are dedicated, friendly professionals, just like Harry Sabine and Mark Ishee at a tournament in Fairfield Glade, Tennessee. Mark showed me around the playing room, pointed out the restroom locations, and explained how to reset a chess clock after reaching the first time control. This veteran really helped me to get over my nervousness."

"Look," continues Katahn, "chess players are no different from members of a visiting basketball team who need to accustom themselves to the sight of an unfamiliar basket. As a clinical psychologist, I know that getting yourself oriented in an unfamiliar environment helps improve your performance."

Second, size up your opponent. There is nothing wrong with sizing up your opponent. Little things often indicate his state of mind. Look to see if he has correctly filled in the scoresheet. If he reverses the colors or writes down the wrong date, then bet that he, too, is feeling some pressure. Small, seemingly unimportant fumbles are a sign of tension.

"My opponent," said Katahn of his very first tournament game, "introduced himself and mentioned casually that he had recently won a novice and unrated section. I was a bit intimidated until shaking his hand. It was even colder and clammier than my own. He was even more nervous than I was."

Third, run constant reality checks. Katahn emphasized the crucial importance of keeping a clear head during the game. Don't become too wrapped up in your plans. Get up during a game, stroll around the tournament playing room, tell yourself that the missed win cannot be unmissed, treat the past—even the rotten move that you just made—as no longer relevant. Steel yourself to make a new beginning. In chess, the only thing that counts is what happens next. "The winner of a game," a famous grandmaster once said, "is he who makes the next to last blunder."

Fourth, throughout the three days of his first tournament, Katahn kept to his standard regimen for eating, sleeping and exercising. No five-minute games, no all-night poker sessions, and no partying with chess friends.

"Maintaining normal habits at a tournament may involve more than self-discipline," Katahn cautions. "For example, I had a hunch that most of the available food at the hotel would be of the high-fat, Southern fried chicken variety. So, I brought along a large loaf of Italian bread, a few quarts of tomato juice and a jar of decaffeinated instant coffee. I felt terrific."

And so, Dick Katahn was mentally and physically prepared for his first chess tournament ever. He felt well oriented in the novel surroundings of a tournament hall.

Does the above sound a mite intimidating? We can assure you that it is not! Most beginning players quickly find chess tournaments to be their favorite vacation time—a place to laugh with friends and make self-deprecating jokes about one's inevitable goofs. In truth, most players deeply hunger for these opportunities at vacation hotels to talk and take meals with their fellow enthusiasts.

People do not think of chess as a gregarious pastime. But it is. There are few places with more camaraderie than a chess tournament.

13 Once They Were Beginners Like You

People have been playing chess for well over a millennium. Most scholars believe that the earliest form of this challenging pastime can be traced to a board game called *chaturanga*, mentioned in the literature of seventh-century India. Among chess players, however, the debate over the game's origins is still lively, with different factions also advancing China, Russia, and the Arab world as the likely birth place.

The modern form of the game has remained essentially the same since the time of Columbus, making chess one of the world's oldest sporting competitions, with a rich and fascinating history. The official world championship dates back to 1886, and there is an undisputed honor roll of unofficial champions reaching back yet another century.

In this chapter, we can give you only a quick overview of world champions past and present, to put into perspective some of the names and personalities we have mentioned throughout this volume and the companion volume (*Secrets of the Russian Chess Masters, Book 1: Fundamentals of the Game*). Fortunately, more books have been written about chess than about all other games combined, and a pleasant voyage of discovery awaits those of you who want to learn more about chess heroes of bygone eras. Among our many chess friends are at least a few who play seldom, if ever, but who derive tremendous satisfaction just from studying chess lore. To each his chessic own!

The dates given in parentheses refer to the period of each player's dominance.

1. ANDRE PHILIDOR (1745–1795)

French music composer. He was the strongest player of the eighteenth century and wrote the first modern instructional work on chess.

2. ALEXANDRE LOUIS DESCHAPELLES (1800–1822)

A strong natural talent, Deschapelles knew little about opening play and contributed almost nothing to the theory of the game.

3. LOUIS CHARLES DE LA BOURDONNAIS (1822–1840)

La Bourdonnais was a brilliant attacking player who continued the French domination of chess by defeating English champion Alexander McDonnell in a series of matches, which are regarded as the first modern chess competitions.

4. LOUIS PIERRE DE SAINT-AMANT (1840–1843)

A transitional figure. Saint-Amant was an attacking player without great opening or positional knowledge. He was the last French player who could be called "world champion."

5. HOWARD STAUNTON (1843–1851)

In 1843 Staunton defeated Saint-Amant in match play. Born with a literary bent, he produced a memorable edition of Shakespeare and the first extensive manual on chess. His play contains positional features that mark it as modern.

6. ADOLF ANDERSSEN (1851–1858, 1862–1866)

At London 1851 Anderssen won the first major international tournament, defeating Staunton along the way. He was a tempestuous attacking player who was, however, less at home in positional play. The last of the great romantics.

7. PAUL MORPHY (1858–1862)

An American child prodigy, he was the greatest player of the nineteenth century. In 1858 Morphy went to Europe and effortlessly defeated virtually every great master, thanks to a grasp of positional and attacking play that was 30 years before its time. He retired undefeated in 1862.

8. WILHELM STEINITZ (1866–1894)

This Austro-American player became the first official world champion by defeating Johann Zukertort in 1886, though many experts consider him to have been the world's leading player after beating Anderssen in an 1866 match. In a series of writings Steinitz developed the principles of what is called "modern chess strategy." Regarded as a defensive genius.

9. EMANUEL LASKER (1894–1921)

Lasker founded no school of chess thought. He taught that chess was above all else a struggle between two opposing wills. His games exhibit a remarkable tactical grasp in the middlegame and a thorough knowledge of the endgame.

10. JOSE RAUL CAPABLANCA (1921-1927)

The second great child prodigy, who learned chess in 1893 at the age of four. Sometimes called "the Mozart of Chess" because of the seeming simplicity and elegance of his play, this Cuban diplomat seldom studied the game. At his best the somewhat indolent Capablanca was unbeatable.

11. ALEXANDER ALEKHINE (1927–1935, 1937–1946)

An exiled Russian nobleman regarded by some as the greatest attacking player of all time, Alekhine worked at chess as a full-time professional. He studied all phases of chess, played many beautiful games and raised chess to the level of art. His industry, combined with Capablanca's nonchalance, made the difference in their 1927 match.

12. MAX EUWE (1935–1937)

Holland's greatest player. Max Euwe was a mathematician who brought the rigor of his profession to chess. His best games are marked by brutal accuracy, if not the sheer genius of a Capablanca or Alekhine. Euwe wrote more books on the opening than any other world champion.

13. MIKHAIL BOTVINNIK (1948–1957, 1958–1960, 1961–1963)

In 1948 Botvinnik became the first Soviet world champion by winning a special title tournament held because of Alekhine's death. Known as "Iron Mike," Botvinnik prepared meticulously and played with iron logic. Because of the Cold War he never met the great U.S. champion Samuel Reshevsky in a title match.

14. VASSILY SMYSLOV (1957–1958)

Smyslov defeated Botvinnik in 1957 and then lost a rematch in 1958. His chess is marked by a calm accuracy and endgame skill reminiscent of Capablanca.

15. MIKHAIL TAL (1960–1961)

Known as the "Magician from Riga," Tal won and lost title matches against Botvinnik. No grandmaster played a more fiery, if not always accurate brand of chess.

16. TIGRAN PETROSIAN (1963–1969)

Petrosian was the python of chess. This Armenian grandmaster employed remarkable tactical and positional skills in the service of a slow, maneuvering style designed to squeeze opponents into submission.

17. BORIS SPASSKY (1969–1972)

Although Boris Spassky is more famous for losing the "Match of the Century" to his successor Robert Fischer, he plays in a wonderful universal style. Spassky is at home in all phases of the game.

18. ROBERT ("BOBBY") FISCHER (1972–1975)

The greatest player of the twentieth century—perhaps of all time. U.S. champion at age 14, Fischer was the third of the great child prodigies. He was also ahead of his time in opening research and by the early 1970s played chess almost flawlessly. After breaking the Soviet monopoly on the world title, he refused to defend it in 1975 because of a dispute over rules. Many observers regard him as the "real" world champion for at least a decade after his being forfeited.

19. ANATOLY KARPOV (1975–1985)

After winning the world title without playing for it, Karpov strung together a long series of tournament successes. Karpov, like Lasker, regards chess as above all a sporting struggle in which the tougher chess he-man will win.

20. GARRY KASPAROV (1985–1997)

Kasparov is in the pantheon of truly great champions. He plays all phases of the game equally well. Although some observers would argue that he lacks the intuitive positional feel of a Capablanca or a Fischer, he plays a more ferocious attacking game than either of these greats. Kasparov set out to model his game on Alekhine's—a quest in which he has succeeded magnificently.

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